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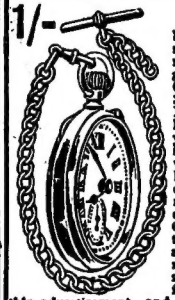

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SHORT STORIES

No. 667.] For the Week Ending October 12th, 1901. [One Penny.

The Adventures of an Actress.

"What is the meaning of this, Captain Tucker?" she demanded. "How dare you commit such an outrage?"

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A THRILLING INSTALMENT.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ACTRESS.

X.—Mid Ocean's Perils.

By DONOVAN MART.

CHAPTER I.

It was Saturday evening, and *The Good Samaritan* Company was giving its farewell performance to a crowded Birmingham theatre.

At the same time, upon the sea wall at Clifton, one of the most beautiful promenades of Bristol's most beautiful suburb, a man and a woman were walking side by side in the gathering gloom. Below them the Avon wound its way to the sea; across the valley lights flickered like fireflies.

"You say you love me," the woman was saying. "I am afraid I have heard that from other men's lips than yours. They are easily said, those three little words, as we actresses know; and you, my dear Maurice, who have had so much to do with things theatrical, should know that just as well as I do."

"I have said I love you, Valerie," answered the man, in a voice tremulous with passion, "and surely you know me well enough to understand that I mean it heart and soul. There is nothing I would not do for you to prove my love. Put me to the test, and you will see I shall not fail you."

Valerie Bellairs gave vent to a low, mirthless laugh.

"Words again," she said, almost mockingly. "Words that might have come straight out of a yellow back. It's easy enough to say that sort of thing. If I were to take you at your word, and ask you to do me a service, I wonder if you would really do all you say you would."

"You can at least try me," cried the other, almost defiantly. "I tell you again that if there is anything I can do that will make me sure of winning you, I'll do it, no matter what it is."

Silence followed the young man's words—a silence that was at length broken by Valerie herself. She spoke in a low, strained, curiously insistent voice.

"Then listen to me, Maurice Scarsdale," she said, "and I will tell you how you can serve me, and thereby ensure my turning a willing ear to your suit. Next Monday, as perhaps you know, *The Good Samaritan* Company is due at Bristol on a week's visit to the town. You may not know that I was once acting in the company myself, and that I was turned out of it by the instrumentality of one of the other members of the company. There is no need for me to tell you in full the story of how I came to leave. Suffice to say, it was due to one of the other ladies who played a trick upon me that I shall not readily forget." Here Valerie paused, so as to let the full weight of her words sink into the brain of the infatuated young man at her side.

How wilful a perversion of the truth her words were those who have followed the course of Hazel Harlow's adventures will readily acknowledge; for it was Valerie's own treachery towards the beautiful young actress that had caused her dismissal from the ranks of the theatrical company.

"Go on," said Scarsdale. "What then?"

"The woman who wronged me," said Valerie, "is one with whose name you are probably familiar—Hazel Harlow—whose much self-advertised name has been in all the papers of Great Britain. And now I will tell you what I want you to do. I want you to help me to punish her who was responsible for my degradation in the eyes of those who were blinded by Hazel Harlow's beauty. So that you see there will be ample opportunity for you to put your protestations into active operation; and you know what your reward will be."

She put her hand confidingly upon the young man's arm. Her touch thrilled him through and through. He felt that nothing would be too much, no sacrifice he could make too great, to win the love of the woman who had infatuated him with all the wiles of a seductive siren.

"But how can I help you?" he went on.

Valerie paused for a few moments.

"There is no good in beating about the bush," she said suddenly. "I want Hazel Harlow got out of the way."

Scarsdale recoiled.

"Got out of the way!" he echoed hoarsely. "Do you mean that you want me to murder her?"

Bellairs laughed.

"No, no, you silly boy!" she answered. "I don't want you to do anything so terrible as that. I merely want her to be removed from the sphere to which she is absolutely unsuited, with her mock prudish airs and graces, her hypocritical ways, which she masks behind a face which is as beautiful as it is false."

Scarsdale's head was in a whirl. Had Valerie asked him to fling himself off the Suspension Bridge, or to dance a jig inside St. Mary's, Redcliff, he would, in his mad infatuation, have probably obeyed her behests; but when he found himself confronted with an exceedingly

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subtle form of intrigue, at the back of which was a jealous woman's hatred of another, small wonder that his somewhat narrow brain refused to grasp the potentialities of the case. Valerie noted his hesitation, and read its meaning rightly.

"Oh, I see," she said, pettishly, "it is as I thought. You are like all the rest; ready enough with lip service, but, when it comes to action, you retire with the best grace you can."

"No, no, no!" answered the love-sick swain, impetuously. "It's not that. You misunderstand me. As I have told you, I will do anything I can to win your love, but I hadn't bargained for so unusual a request as this. How on earth am I going to get Miss Hazel Harlow out of the way, here in the twentieth century—I who have had no experience in such sort of things?"

Again Valerie laughed.

"You speak like a child, Maurice," she said. "Where are your inventive faculties? Can you think of no scheme whereby a girl can be put out of the way without danger to yourself or harm to her? And think—help me in this, be successful in removing the woman who has wronged me so deeply from my path, and I will do anything you like. I can't say more."

Had not Maurice Scarsdale been so desperately infatuated with the unscrupulous actress, he would most assuredly have paused before committing himself indiscriminately to so unusual a request. He must have seen that there was something more deep than mere personal spite at the back of the business. Here was a woman who had won for herself a name in the theatrical profession—for this assuredly Valerie Bellairs had done—who was so carried away by animus that she was ready to go to almost any extremes to have removed a young girl, little more than a *débutante*, who could not surely assail her own position as an actress.

He must have seen, moreover, that such a story as Valerie had told him required more sifting than to be immediately swallowed as gospel when so sketchily presented.

But he saw none of this. He saw only a woman of undoubted charm, who had shown him only one way whereby he could win her love. At that moment Maurice Scarsdale was a monomaniac; his one idea was to win Valerie's consent to become his wife, no matter what means were employed in the achievement of his ends.

"Look here," went on Valerie, "to-morrow is Sunday. Think if you can't work out some plan in the morning. I'll meet you in the afternoon, and you shall tell me what decision you have come to; and, if all goes well, before the end of the week perhaps you will come to me and say, 'Valerie, I have earned the right to call you my wife. Let me name the happy day,' as the conventional phrase has it."

Intoxicated by her words, and favoured by the obscurity and the loneliness of the spot, Scarsdale suddenly flung his arms round the actress, and, drawing her to him, pressed his lips against her own.

"Valerie, my darling!" he murmured, hoarsely; "I'll win you, come what may!"

With a little cry, the actress disengaged herself from her lover's fervent embrace.

"Naughty boy!" she said archly. "I didn't tell you you might do that. You haven't really earned it yet. I must go now. I'll meet you on the Clifton end of the Suspension Bridge to-morrow evening at six o'clock. I hope then you will have something to tell me."

CHAPTER II.

As can be well imagined, there was but little sleep for Maurice Scarsdale that night. Fitfully he lay awake, tossing from side to side on his bed, all the time thinking, "How can I get Hazel Harlow put out of the way?"

So intoxicated was he with passion for Valerie that it never for one instant occurred to him that not only did he run a great risk in solving the problem, but that he was also participating in a peculiarly cowardly and underhand crime. And when morning came he was still no nearer the elucidation of the problem than he had been the night before upon the sea-wall.

He rose early, and after a hurried breakfast, determined to take a good long walk down to the docks at Avonmouth, under the impression that by so doing he might be able to discover a way out of the difficulty. Think as he would, however, his brain remained as barren as ever.

At about mid-day he turned into a little public-house not far from the docks to have a glass of beer and some bread-and-cheese to appease the healthy appetite that not even the difficult problem could overthrow.

The bar of the public-house was partitioned off as some old-fashioned hostelries still are. At one end of the room was the bar proper, then came a wooden partition, behind which was a table with forms on either side of it, then another partition, and a table and forms as before.

He sat down in the end partition and began discussing his frugal meal. Suddenly voices on the other side of the boarding that formed the back of his seat, attracted his attention.

"I must sail on Wednesday then," the voice was saying. "As you know, we're bound for New York, and it's money out of my pocket to wait later."

"Whether you sail on Wednesday or not depends upon yourself; I must have that twenty pounds you owe me before Tuesday, or you'll have to stay here. I can't wait any longer, Si Tucker."

"That would spell ruin," answered the man thus addressed, in a hoarse voice. "I can't find twenty pounds, and that's all there is to be said about it. Surely you can give me a while longer. I hope to clear a bit this voyage."

"That's just what you said before," answered the man who had previously spoken. "No; I give you fair warning. You can't say I've been hard on you, and it's gospel truth I want that twenty pounds powerful bad. Either you hand it to me before you sail, or I shall have to put the law on you."

Silence followed these last words. Then came the sound as of a man rising to his feet and preparing to leave the inn. Scarsdale looked eagerly round the partition. A big, black-bearded man was sitting moodily at a table; a smaller, keener-faced fellow, was just on the point of going. The next moment he had gone, and the black-bearded sailor was left seated gloomily alone.

In a moment Scarsdale had risen from his seat and slipped inside the place vacated by the insistent creditor. That the sailor resented his intrusion at once became apparent.

"Who the blazes are you?" he said savagely; "and what in Hades do you want in shoving yourself down afore my nose?"

But Scarsdale was not to be put off by this ebullition of somewhat natural spleen.

"Steady on, mate," he said pleasantly. "I came here because I may be able to do you a service."

Surely that's your photo on page 466?

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"A service! You? How?"

Scarsdale hesitated. Then he plunged straight to the point.

"A matter of twenty pounds, and perhaps more," he said shortly.

The man half rose to his feet and uttered an oath.

"You've been spying, curse you," he said savagely. "I shall have to teach you manners."

"Sit down and don't make a noise," answered the other quietly. "I haven't been spying, only I couldn't help hearing what you said. I tell you that perhaps I can put you in the way of making twenty pounds, and saving your bacon on Tuesday. If you'll be reasonable I'll tell you further what I mean." For the conversation that he had overheard had suddenly given Scarsdale the inspiration he had waited for.

The man, whose name we have heard as being Tucker, was quiet in an instant.

"Are you in earnest, governor?" he said, suspicion still latent in his voice.

"Yes. But can't you take me to a place more private than this? I can't say what I want to say here."

"Come aboard my schooner," answered Tucker; "she's scarce two cables' lengths from here. There's no fear that we shall be interrupted there. All my hands are ashore; we shall have the whole ship to ourselves."

Scarsdale paid for his beer, and followed the seaman out of the inn. A black-hulled schooner was lying alongside the quay. On her stern was painted in white "*Susan Tucker*, Bristol."

"That's her," said Tucker, with a jerk of his thumb towards the vessel. "She's called *Susan* after my missus, who died some years ago."

As he spoke he swung himself from the quayside on to the schooner's deck, and Scarsdale made haste to follow him. Tucker led the way down the companion hatchway into a by no means uncomfortable cabin, the cleanliness of which was almost painfully apparent.

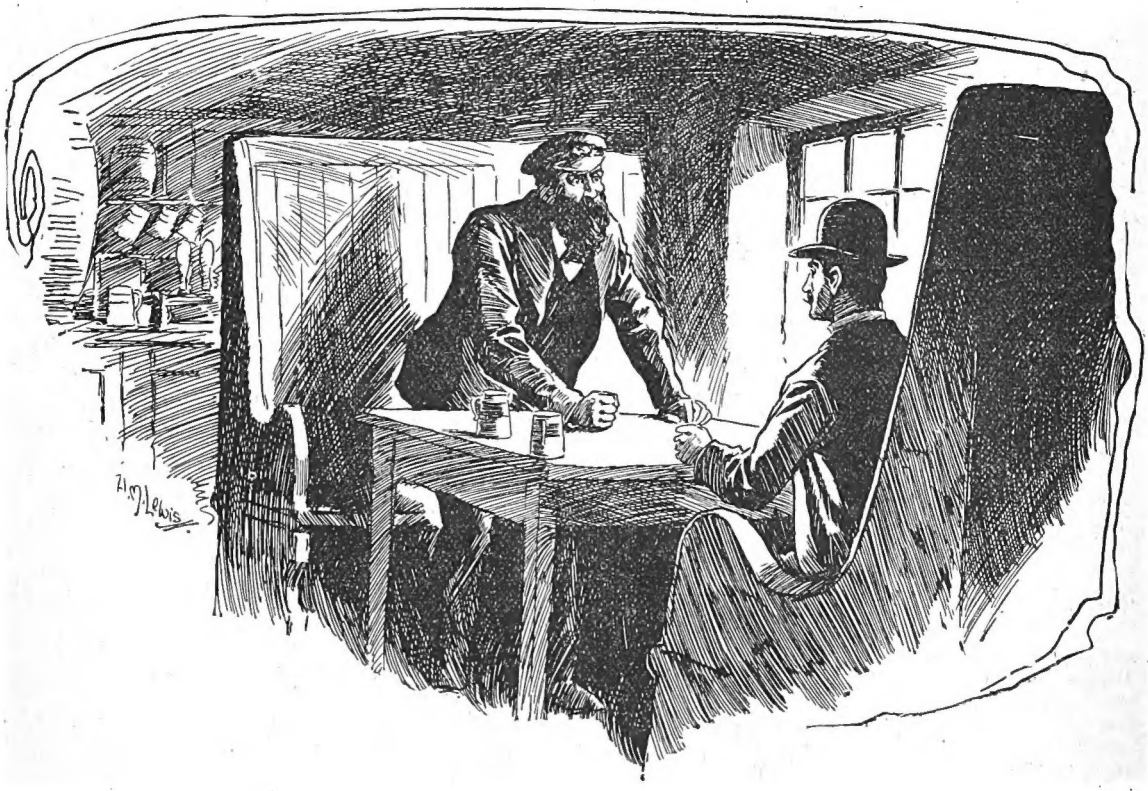
"Now then," said Tucker, "I'm a plain-dealing, plain-spoken seaman. You've made a suggestion to me; supposing as you comes to the point without more beating about the bush. You deal fair and square with me, and I'll do the same by you."

But it was by no means easy for Maurice Scarsdale to obey so simple a behest. It was some moments before he could find speech.

"I won't disguise from you the fact," he said, "that the earning of your money will be by no means an easy job. In fact, you will have to work out the details of it yourself. All I can do is to guarantee you the fifty pounds if it comes off, and as an earnest of my offer I am ready to discharge your debt in advance."

The man's eyes gleamed.

"Well, that's square enough," he said heartily. "There's



"You've been spying, curse you," he cried savagely. "I shall have to teach you manners."

H. T. Johnson's new serial begins next week.

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something to get hold of there, and if you're ready to do as you say, well, I'll do all I can to help you in what you want."

Then his voice changed.

"It isn't murder you want me to do, is it?" he said constrainedly.

Scarsdale shook his head.

"No, it isn't murder," he replied; "and remember I don't want to bind you down to do anything. If, when you hear what I have to say, you think the task is beyond you, I shall have to have your word that not a syllable passes your lips as to what has transpired between us to-day."

"There's my word and hand on that," cried Tucker, and he thrust out a hairy fist as a token of his sincerity.

"Good!" continued Scarsdale. "And now let's come to business. There is a certain lady possessed of undoubted external charms who is, nevertheless, an exceedingly dangerous personage. This woman has it in her power to do a great deal of harm to another lady, towards whom my feelings are of the tenderest. I hope I have made myself plain so far?"

Tucker nodded.

"Go on," said he, with interest.

"Now it is as well for all parties concerned," continued the young man, "that this same woman should be removed for a certain time from a sphere of action in which she is more of an ornament than a credit. I will be perfectly frank with you. Can I obtain the spiriting away of the lady for a month or so my dearest object will be attained, and I shall be able to call the woman I love my very own!"

The seaman's eyes glittered.

"I see how the land lies," he said slowly. "It's a case of kidnapping I'm in for. Well, it's a dangerous job, as you know, sir, but fifty pounds is a lot of money to a poor man like me. There's a good deal to be thought of, though. Who's the lady? Is she in Bristol? Where does she live? Has she many friends?"

But Maurice put up his hand with a half laugh.

"One at the time if you please," he said. "I'm coming to details now; but, as you say, it's a pretty desperate job. If you still think you're game to go on with it, I'll give you fuller details."

"I'm game all right," came the reckless answer. "Silas Tucker ain't the sort of man to turn up his nose at fifty pounds, especially when he's in such a hole as I am. Why, ruin stares me in the face unless I raise the wind somehow. There's a big hole below my water-line, as you might say, and it's all I can do to keep the pumps going fast enough. Drowning men catch at straws, so you needn't be afraid to trust me."

The man was evidently in earnest.

"Very well," said Scarsdale, "we'll get to details. In the first place, the lady's name is Miss Hazel Harlow, and——"

But Tucker sprang to his feet with an oath. "Miss Hazel Harlow, the actress!" he cried, and his face went pale beneath his tan.

"Yes," answered the other in amazement. "Why?"

"You need say no more," said Tucker.

"Say no more? Do you refuse?"

"Refuse! no! Give me the twenty pounds you promised me and ask no more. The fifty pounds is mine."

"Have you taken leave of your senses, man?" cried Maurice, an expression of the blankest amazement, as was indeed pardonable, upon his face.

"Taken leave of my senses—no! I should think not! Why, look here, I'll give you my signed agreement to the undertaking. Do I look like a madman?"

"No; but surely you'll be more explicit?"

"By your leave, sir, I'd rather not. You've asked me to work it out in my own way, and I've done it already. You've made your bargain, now let me make mine. Give me the twenty pounds that you promised, and forward me the other thirty to an address in New York which I'll give you, and which you can send on as soon as you discover that Miss Harlow has disappeared."

Maurice Scarsdale's mystification was only intensified by the seaman's last remark, yet hasty reflection convinced him that Tucker knew what he was saying. He spoke with the air of a man who knew what he was about, and surely a rough seaman could not be expected to be a master hand at intrigue. No, there must be some extraordinary chain of circumstances by which the skipper of the *Susan Tucker* had been led up to an acquaintance with Hazel Harlow, and besides, it might perhaps be as well for Scarsdale not to know the full details of the plot. His name would be all the less likely to be mixed up in the affair.

"Very well," he said suddenly, "I'll consent. It's a big thing to trust you like this, and I wouldn't do it unless there were reasons for my keeping in the background."

He took a pocket-book from the inside of his coat, and produced two ten-pound Bank of England notes.

"Here's the earnest money," he said. "I shall want your receipt and the agreement you promised to give me. Then, when I learn that Miss Harlow has really disappeared—and you seem pretty confident of being able to achieve that—I will forward the thirty pounds to any address that you like to give me."

And thus the dark bond was ratified.

CHAPTER III.

It was Monday morning. *The Good Samaritan* Company had arrived in Bristol the day before, and were ready to begin their campaign in the western city. The week at Birmingham had been an eventful one. It had witnessed the temporary loss of the volunteer actor, Eric Monteith, to the company. It had also witnessed the tragic death of Jenny Lovelace's uncle, and the averting of a terrible danger to Hazel Harlow from the unwearying hand of Horace Caldecott.

There were members of the company who had been secretly delighted at the untoward accident that had deprived them of Eric's companionship. Needless to say, this feeling was not shared by Raymond Venables, the manager, by Hazel, or by Jenny. But Eric was of a different calibre to the ordinary travelling actor, while he had not enough so-called levity in his composition to endear him to the minds of the other ladies of the company. He did not flirt or pay them those attentions so dear to their frivolous hearts. He looked askance at their goings-on with unknown young "mashers," and besides, he was the champion of "that stuck-up Miss Harlow."

It was a lovely autumn morning. Jenny and Hazel had determined to devote their first day to exploring Bristol, and had set out to visit Clifton and the famous Suspension Bridge. They had reached College Green when suddenly Hazel's attention was attracted by a young man dressed in the garb of a merchant sailor,

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with brown face and merry blue eyes, who approached her and pulled off his peaked cap.

"Why, surely," he began diffidently, "it's Hazel—Miss Harlow, I suppose I should say now."

Hazel drew back a few paces. A look of wonderment came into her eyes. "Well, of all the extraordinary things," she said, "it's Amos—Amos White! Jenny, this is a very old friend of mine. We used to play as boy and girl together at Honeycote. What in the world brings you to Bristol, Amos?"

"I'm a sailor now," said the young man pleasantly; "I said good-bye to Honeycote more than a year ago. And in the meanwhile you've grown to be a famous actress. I thought you would have quite forgotten Amos White. Hazel and I were boy and girl sweethearts, miss," he said, turning to Jenny.

There was something exceedingly winning in the sailor's face. Jenny could not help feeling fascinated by his breezy, open manner, and the frank admiration with which he regarded his beautiful ex-playfellow.

"So you're a sailor, Amos," cried Hazel. "That's a good deal more interesting than old sleepy Honeycote would be—travelling all round the world and seeing all sorts of beautiful places."

Amos laughed.

"Well, there's something in that," he said, "but, unfortunately, the life of a sailor isn't exactly what you read it is in books. It's all right in summer, when you're sailing along beneath the beautiful sun, and it's no hardship to skip aloft and reef the topsail or some such job. But in winter, when you can't walk on the deck for ice and there's a roaring north-easter kicking up the sea, it's a different story. Then the food isn't of the best, and the pay is mighty little. Still, I like it in a way, and I wouldn't go back to Honeycote now."

"Is your ship in Bristol then?" went on Hazel.

"Yes, but we're outward bound this week. I'll tell you what," he said, "it would give me an awful lot of pleasure if you would come down to the docks and have a look over the vessel before she sails."

Hazel's eyes sparkled.

"I should like nothing better," she said. "I have always longed to see over a ship, and it would be doubly interesting to see yours."

"It's not mine," laughed the young fellow, "and it's not a big liner. It's only an old sailing boat, though she's a pretty big one of her class. Supposing you come down to-morrow morning. I'll come and fetch you wherever you like, and I can bring you back, as we don't sail till Wednesday."

Hazel turned to Jenny. "Would you like to go?" she said.

"I can't go to-morrow, dear," was the answer; "I've promised to go and see Lily Desmond. She's living in Clifton now, as I told you. She's married and given up the stage, and I promised her I would go to-morrow, but I am sure with such a protector as Mr. White, especially as he is such an old friend, you'll be perfectly safe."

Jenny spoke with all sincerity. She could see no danger ahead for Hazel. Surely this frank-faced, blue-eyed young sailor-boy, the friend of Hazel's youth, would see that she came to no harm? And so it was settled, and Amos was invited to call for Hazel at her lodgings at ten o'clock the next morning.

Punctually at the appointed time the young fellow made his appearance. Hazel was full of high spirits. The prospect of a visit to the busy dock was most alluring. She chatted gaily to her comrade as they sat in the train that was to convey them to Avonmouth. It was quite refreshing to meet an old friend. As he had said, Amos and she had been boy and girl sweethearts. They had played together round the old farmstead, ridden bare-back horses together, and helped in a hundred and one farm duties so dear to the youthful mind.

Hazel told the young fellow how she had come to leave the farm; how the horrible persecutions of Squire Caldecott had made her take the somewhat formidable step of coming to London and embarking on a theatrical life.

"And are you happy, Hazel?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," answered the girl. "If it were not for one thing: the horrid shadow of Squire Caldecott's attentions. For you know, Amos, he has tried in a hundred and one ways to entrap me into becoming his wife."

The young sailor's face darkened.

"I wish I could get near him with a rope's end," he said. "I'd make him smart for his blackguardism." Then his voice changed and became strangely tender. "Surely it would be better for you, Hazel, to rid yourself for ever of his unwelcome attentions. You can only ensure that by leaving the stage, by finding someone who will give you the protection that you need to keep such as Squire Caldecott at arm's length. By that I mean you ought to find some man who honestly loves you and who would be ready to give up everything for your sake."

The young sailor spoke in a manly, straightforward way, that went direct to Hazel's heart.

"But then I should have to forfeit my liberty," she said almost plaintively. "I should have to get married and give up all my aspirations of becoming a really good actress. I don't want to marry unless I can find a man whom I really and truly love."

"And you haven't found that man yet?" There was a strange eagerness in the questioner's voice.

"No. And until I do I shall struggle on as best I can with only myself to rely upon."

Amos said no more. His face had grown curiously grave, and his manner remarkably constrained. Hazel was too pre-occupied with the thoughts reawakened within her by all her companion had said to notice his constraint.

So little more in the way of conversation passed between them until the docks were reached.

The novelty of her situation and surroundings soon dispelled the serious thoughts in Hazel's mind. The bustle on the quayside, the many vessels lying in the port, the din and rattle of the steam cranes as they hoisted great bales from the black interiors of the vessels, or lowered great packages into the holds, were a revelation to her. On every hand was bustle and confusion. Crates of bananas from Jamaica, bales of tea and sugar with queer foreign-looking marks upon them, live stock and machinery—there was nothing apparently that the ships did not devour or emit.

"Here's our boat," said Amos suddenly, pointing to a schooner that lay alongside the quay. Hazel looked at it with interest. It seemed to her a thing of grace and beauty with its raking forepeak and long, tapering masts, which seemed connected one with another by an absolutely bewildering network of cordage. The deck of the ship was as white as snow; the boats that hung from the davits on the deck had lately received a new

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coat of paint. There was a neat deck-house amidships painted green. Everything seemed to have been polished with scrupulous care and lavishness.

"What a lovely ship!" cried the actress in unaffected delight.

"That's the skipper leaning on the taffrail," said Amos, "If you step across this gangway he will be only too pleased to let me show you round. I told him I wanted to bring you when I got back yesterday, and so he set us all to work making things shipshape. He's been a good skipper to me, and he saved my life. I can tell you about that later on."

Hazel's face grew grave as the memory of that awful episode came back to her. (See *Short Stories*, No. 664.)

"Amos told me at the time," the skipper went on, "how you and he had been playmates together, and how he hoped that perhaps some day he would have the pleasure of seeing you again. So when we got into Bristol and learnt that you were due here this week, I says to Amos, 'Here's your chance. I'm sure Miss Harlow is not the sort to go and forget old friends,' and I see I was right."

The bluff, hearty way in which Tucker spoke quite won Hazel's heart.

The dark sails of the ship, silhouetted against the darker sky beyond, melted slowly away from view.

In a few moments Hazel was on board the vessel, and skipper had come forward and was welcoming her aboard.

"Honoured to see you, miss," he said. "It's a long time since the *Susan Tucker* had such a fair visitor aboard."

Hazel laughed. "I always have heard that sailors knew how to flatter," she said, "and now I see I was not misinformed."

"Oh, we heard of you some time ago," answered the captain. "We got into Belfast just after the company you were acting in left. All the town was talking about an adventure you had been in—how you had been picked up at sea and rescued by a warship."

"Old friends are always the best," she said with a winning smile, turning towards Amos as she spoke.

The blood leapt up into the young seaman's face; a sudden thrill ran through him. How beautiful she was; and this was the little Hazel who had played with him among the fields and pastures at Honeycote. Little did he dream of this day then.

"And now," said White, "let me show you over the ship. First of all I'll take you round the deck and explain as much as I can, and then we'll dive below and explore."

There were three or four other sailors on board, and probably more below. They all grinned somewhat sheepishly at the young girl, but made no remarks.

Surely that's your photo on page 466?

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Amos was a good guide. He explained to the girl as much as he could about the working of the vessel, told her the names of the chief spars, and muddled her head with technicalities about "to'gallantsles" and halliards until at last Hazel cried for mercy.

"Very well," said the young man with a laugh, "let's go down below. I want to tell you how the skipper saved my life." He took her into the galley and showed her the cook's quarter's, and then into the fo'castle, where were the seamen's quarters.

"And now we'll see the captain's quarters," he wound up.

The captain was evidently a man of somewhat luxurious ideas, to judge by the cheerful little curtains that were drawn in front of his porthole, a well-filled bookcase and a comfortable lounge chair. There were many little ornaments about the cabin that struck Hazel as being remarkably out of keeping with a man of his appearance and manners. She made no comments, however, and at the young man's bidding sat down on a chair and prepared to listen to his story.

"You must know," he began, "that we had reached Bahia, which is a South American seaport, and a pretty lively sort of place. I had gone on shore to see the town, and was strolling down rather a narrow street when I was suddenly set on by three or four Dagos, rough-looking half-castes, who generally have a knife or something on their persons. Well, they set on me, and I was cornered. I used my fists as well as I could, but one of them got his knife in my arm"—he rolled up his sleeve and disclosed a livid scar upon his muscular forearm—"and I was pretty nearly done for. Suddenly there was a shout and something rushed uplike a typhoon, which turned out to be Captain Tucker himself. He let out right and left, and before you could say 'knife' the Dagos had gone for all they were worth, and I was saved. It doesn't sound so much in the telling, but it was a pretty plucky thing to do to come single-handed and go for such ruffians as those. I've owed a debt of gratitude to the skipper ever since, and it'll take a long time to repay."

After that Amos took up the tale of his numerous adventures on land and sea, and he proved to be such an excellent *raconteur* that Hazel sat spell-bound, taking no heed of the fact that time sped on much more quickly than she would have believed possible.

As for Amos, he was in the seventh heaven of delight. To sit there with his old playfellow, now developed into the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, was in itself a de ight as enthralling as anything he remembered to have experienced. His eyes and ears too were blind and deaf to anything that was passing beyond the environments of the little cabin, so that it was with a sense as of a rude physical shock that he heard Hazel say:

"Why, good gracious! Surely we are moving!"

The young sailor sprang to his feet with an exclamation of amazement, and rushed to the door of the cabin. To his still deeper sense of surprise, mingled now with a faint feeling of apprehension, he made the discovery that the door was locked; neither could there be any doubt but that it was true what Hazel had said, the vessel was moving slowly through the water. He could hear the gentle lap, lap, of the wavelets against the vessel's side, could tell by the hurried footsteps overhead and the noise of creaking blocks and rattling shrouds that the *Susan Tucker* was gathering way towards the open sea.

What could be the meaning of it? Tucker had distinctly told him that the vessel was to put to sea the next morning. He rattled at the door handle and shouted with all the strength of his lungs: "Hi! Let us out! We're locked in!"

For even now he could not conceive of foul play. He could not see that behind Tucker's eagerness for him to bring Miss Harlow aboard lay something more sinister than the mere expression of goodwill; and besides, what possible object could Tucker have had in abducting the young actress? For of course Amos had been kept in total ignorance of the interview between Maurice Scarsdale and Tucker.

No one answered the young sailor's shouts. He turned round and faced Hazel with a somewhat helpless expression upon his face.

"Upon my soul, I don't know what's the meaning of this," he said gravely. "There must be a mistake somewhere."

Hazel read the suspicions dawning in his eyes that there was foul play afoot somewhere. The colour left her face.

"Are we really putting out to sea?" she asked in a low voice.

"Yes," came the somewhat reluctant answer. "But keep up your heart, Hazel. It's a long way down Channel, and perhaps the skipper is only going to take you for a short trip and put you ashore somewhere Portishead or Weston way."

"But it's preposterous!" cried Hazel. "Break open the door, Amos. I must get out. What will Jenny think? What will they all think?"

Suddenly a voice from outside rang on their startled ears. It was Tucker's.

"If you try and break that door open, Amos," he said in a stentorian tone, "I'll have you put into irons and clapped below hatches for insubordination. I'm skipper aboard this ship, and don't you forget it."

Amos's heart seemed to turn to lead within him. He stood stock still, as though turned to stone. The truth was at last forced home indeed to him that there was foul play afoot.

The next moment the door was flung open, and Silas Tucker entered the cabin, closing the portal behind him. In a moment Hazel flung herself forward.

"What is the meaning of this, Captain Tucker?" she said peremptorily. "How dare you commit such an outrage as to attempt to kidnap a helpless woman who has never, so far as she knows, done you any harm? You cannot be really in earnest in trying to keep me aboard here against my will. What is the meaning of it all?"

"It means, miss," came the stolid answer, "that you've got to make this voyage with us. You're going on a trip for the benefit of your health to New York and back. It will only be three or four months at the most, and that's all there is about it."

Amos stared at his captain with horror-stricken eyes.

"You're joking, captain," he cried, hoarsely. "It can never be true what you say—that you're going to make Miss Harlow go to New York with us."

"You heard what I said," answered Tucker fiercely. "Now, either you give me your parole not to kick up rough, or else I clap you in irons, as I said, for insubordination. You signed articles under me, Mr. Amos White, and you know perfectly well what that means."

"Yes, but—" broke in Amos.

H. T. Johnson's new serial begins next week.

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"There are no 'buts' aboard my ship," came the answer. "Now I'll leave you here to talk with your old playfellow a bit, and come back in an hour or so to find out whether you are ready to obey my orders." And without another word he turned round and left the cabin, locking the door behind him as he departed.

Dead silence reigned between the pair after Tucker's departure. Hazel was too dazed, too stunned by what she had heard, to realise the full purport of the black business.

Amos was no whit less astounded. A wild rage boiled in his heart, yet what could he do? Tucker was his master, with despotic authority aboard his own vessel.

"Look here," he began, suddenly, sitting down beside Hazel, and speaking in a whisper, "our only chance is to acquiesce. If we pretend to fall in with the skipper's views, and to make the best of a bad job, perhaps we may find some way of escape. It's our only chance, I am sure. I know the captain pretty well. I can't believe he's really bad-hearted. There must be some influence at work about which we know nothing that has brought about this action of his. And, whatever happens, I'll stick to you through thick and thin, Hazel. Tell me you believe that I have no hand in this business. I know no more of it than you do. I swear it."

"I believe you—oh, I believe you!" murmured the girl brokenly, faintly comforted by the knowledge that Amos was really loyal and ready to help her. "And if you think that's our best course, why, I'll back you up with all the means in my power."

"Good! And now tell me"—this somewhat shamefacedly—"have you any money on you?"

"Five pounds," answered Hazel.

"Then will you give it to me? There is reason in my request. I don't want it for myself. I only want to use it as a means to obtain an end."

"Then you have a plan?"

"Yes; but I daren't say any more, for fear someone may be listening. But when Tucker comes again we shall know how to behave."

CHAPTER IV.

On leaving her friend's house on the afternoon of the same day upon which the *Susan Tucker* had set sail, the first thought of Jenny Lovelace was of Hazel, who had promised to be back at their lodgings not later than four o'clock.

As she hurried along the streets, she suddenly ran into a woman. Both recoiled—both involuntarily uttered an exclamation of surprise. The woman was Valerie Bellairs.

Jenny recoiled. She had not forgotten the discreditable part Valerie had played at Scarborough in attempting to bring about Hazel's downfall. In a moment the thought flashed through her brain—"What is Bellairs doing in Clifton?"

"How do you do, Miss Lovelace?" said Valerie, sneeringly. "Where is Miss Harlow? I thought you and she were inseparable."

Angry words were on the tip of Jenny's tongue. With an effort she restrained herself, and with a haughty gesture of disdain swept on in silence. Her action goaded Valerie to fury.

"See that you keep your eye on your friend," she muttered in a low voice. "It wouldn't be nice if you were to lose her." With which words she hurried on.

Jenny hastened back to the lodgings a prey to a mighty wave of anger; yet all the time she kept saying to herself—"Why is that woman in Clifton? She's up to no good, I'll be bound."

There was no sign of Hazel at the lodgings. Jenny waited till five in growing anxiety, and at last could bear the suspense no more. She determined to rush off and find Venables and to ask his advice. Now that Eric was no longer at hand to assist them, both she and Hazel relied on the manager much more than either of them would ever have thought possible.

On learning that Hazel had disappeared, Venables was at once of the opinion that they should take train to Avonmouth and see if they could discover the name of the vessel that Hazel had gone to see. Jenny knew the name of the captain to be Tucker, and this fact was sure to be of assistance to them.

"Upon my word, it's enough to turn a man white-headed," said Venables. "As if it wasn't bad enough to have all the responsibilities of a theatrical company upon one's shoulders, without having one's leading lady continually in some desperate strait or other. I've been connected with the profession fifteen years, and I never remember to have conducted a tour that's been fraught with such terrible dangers as the present one. Unless one really participated in them oneself, and knew exactly the nature of the perils that confront our beautiful Hazel, upon my word, human credence wouldn't swallow their possibility."

Inquiry at the docks elicited the astounding information that the *Susan Tucker* had sailed outward bound some hours before. She had had one passenger, so quayside loafers affirmed, a lady, who had seemed overjoyed at the prospect of a trip.

This information nearly drove Venables and Jenny frantic. Yet of what good would it be to raise a fuss there? They dashed off to police headquarters, and laid their case before them. Here they were met with that official indifference and incredulity which anything out of the common so often produces in the minds of those used to red tape and laws of rule of thumb.

In vain Venables stormed and raged, and implored that steps might be taken to waylay the vessel before it really got out to the open sea. His excited demeanour only produced irascibility in officialdom. "A pretty job," growled the superintendent, "to go and hunt for a three-masted schooner on the high seas, and how do we know that the young lady hasn't gone off of her own free will? There was a lover in the case, I'll be bound, and when you once have dealing with an actress, well, you never know what's going to happen. Why, the very people on the quay say the girl was jolly and laughing. There was no suspicion of foul play there. The young lady went on board of her own free will. No, you may make up your mind there was a parson on board and she's off on her honeymoon trip."

This apparently brutal callousness, which was nevertheless only the commonsense view of a man through whose hands passed all sorts and conditions of men and women, and who had got into the habit of hearing the most outrageous stories without attaching much importance to them, had, as can be well imagined, a most depressing effect upon the two comrades in misfortune. They were powerless to do more than they had done, however, and as all their prayers and entreaties availed nothing, they were bound to retire, baffled and beaten.

Hazel's fame and beauty had reached Bristol before her,

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the advance bookings at the theatre had been almost unprecedented, and now Hazel had disappeared, and there seemed but little chance of ever seeing her again.

The performance that night was a dead failure. The whole company was demoralised by the news that Hazel had somehow mysteriously disappeared, though Venables and Jenny both resolved to keep the true facts of the case, as far as they knew them, locked up in their own breasts. Hazel's understudy was but a poor substitute for Hazel herself. Jenny could hardly speak her lines for utter misery. The audience soon grew intolerant, and among them sat the two who had been responsible for this heart-rending state of affairs, Maurice Scarsdale and Valerie, jubilant at the success of her lover's plot. And Scarsdale was radiant in the knowledge that Valerie had promised to become his wife when *The Good Samaritan* Company had left Bristol.

CHAPTER V.

In the meantime the *Susan Tucker*, under a full spread of canvas, was drawing steadily away beneath the influence of a six-knot breeze towards the open sea. In accordance with their preconcerted arrangements, Hazel and Amos had apparently resigned themselves to the inevitable. Hazel had brought all her powers of acting into play, and Tucker was jubilant at her change of front. It was evident to the skipper's somewhat narrow brain that the girl already viewed her prospects with equanimity.

"If it wasn't for Amos, Captain," she said archly, "I should feel most unhappy; but we are such old friends, he and I; you know we were boy and girl sweethearts. Of course I had to appear reluctant, but"— she treated the captain to a witching glance from her radiant eyes —"we know each other well, he and I."

Tucker chuckled. "So that's how the wind blows," he said good-humouredly, "Well, you're a deep one, you are. Well, Amos is a lucky fellow, and" (so ran the unspoken conclusion of his sentence) "I've never earned fifty pounds so cheaply in all my life."

This change of front enabled Amos to see about the carrying out of a scheme that had occurred to him with comparative ease. No restriction was made upon his or Hazel's actions. They were allowed to go hither and thither on the vessel as they liked, and Amos went about his duties as though nothing had happened.

He had ascertained who were to be on watch that night. There was to be a man at the wheel, and another seaman in spells of two hours each the night long. The man who went on watch at about eleven o'clock was a seaman named Dan Perkins, a good-hearted, jolly sort of fellow, on friendly terms with Amos. Him the young sailor sought out, and after a whispered conversation between them, pressed some money into his hand. The same thing happened with the man who was to take the wheel.

At ten o'clock Tucker retired to rest, free from any suspicion that anything untoward was amiss. At about half-past eleven Amos tapped noiselessly at the door of the cabin that had been set aside for Hazel. He then stole on deck, where in a few minutes he was joined by the girl herself. They went forward steadily, where they were met by Perkins.

What happened to them is soon told. Amos and Hazel clambered up into the long-boat, that was swinging on the davits, and were let noiselessly down into the sea by Perkins. So far, so good.

The schooner slid past them as they lay motionless upon the heaving waters of the Bristol Channel. The dark sails of the ship, silhouetted against the darker sky beyond, melted slowly away from view. Then White, shipping the oars between the thole-pins, began pulling with the quick, practised hand of a man used to such work, in the opposite direction to which the vessel was travelling.

* * * * *

The steamer *Windermere*, bound from Waterford to Bristol, in ballast, was churning a leisurely way up the Bristol Channel towards her port. She was somewhere off Portishead when suddenly her look-out yelled in a stentorian voice, "Small boat on the starboard bow, sir, signalling for assistance!"

A bell rang in the engine-room; the screw of the *Windermere* ceased revolving.

"Ship ahoy!" came out of the darkness. "Throw us a line. I've a lady aboard who wants help."

In a moment all was bustle and confusion on the steamer's deck. The small boat drew alongside her, a ladder was let down, and, aided by the light of a lantern, two figures swung themselves up over the vessel's side, the one a tall, beautiful, stylishly-dressed lady, the other a man clad in the garb of a common sailor.

"What's this?" said the skipper of the *Windermere*, who had come down from the bridge, attracted by the unusual incident.

In a few words Hazel gave him the outline of her story. Deeply interested, he led the way to his own private cabin; his interest only grew more intense as he heard the girl's story in full, and noted the wondrous beauty of her face and form.

"You are never Miss Hazel Harlow?" he said. "Why, all Ireland knows the story of your adventure at Belfast. You seem destined for maritime excitement. It was smart the way you escaped this time. Won't Captain Tucker be mad to-morrow morning? Anyhow, you're safe here. What an old rascal the fellow must be. I wonder what the true story of the business is."

But the skipper was never destined to know that nor indeed, was Hazel, for what means had she of discovering the real facts of the case, how that it was again the hand of Valerie Bellairs that had been raised to work her undoing?

There is little more to be told. It was early the next morning when the *Windermere* arrived in Bristol, so that Hazel was enabled to start for her lodgings before Jenny had risen from a couch from which all thought of sleep had been banished.

As for Amos, the captain of the *Windermere* was so pleased with the young man's part in the affair that he had then and there offered to take him on as one of the steamer's crew.

"You needn't be afraid of old Tucker trying to find you," the captain had said. "He probably thinks you are in Davy Jones's locker by now."

And so the event did not turn out so badly for Amos as he had anticipated.

"Perhaps we may meet again some day, Hazel," he said, as with tears in her eyes she thanked him again and again for his devotion to her.

"I'll write to you sometimes if I can," he went on, "and tell you how I'm getting on. And now as an old friend let me give you a word of advice. Try and find a gentleman worthy of you, who will make a home for you and protect you from the recurrence of such an accident as

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the one that has just befallen you. Anyhow, good luck be always with you."

Jenny's joy at having her friend so miraculously restored to her can be well imagined. Hazel poured into her willing ears the full story of what had happened. After she had finished Jenny cried out:

"I am sure Valerie Bellairs has had a hand in this." And she told Hazel of her meeting with the actress, and of the veiled innuendo that Valerie had thrown out concerning Hazel herself.

And if the performance of the night before had been unworthy of the traditions of *The Good Samaritan* Company, the same could not be said for that night's representation.

Hazel received a tremendous ovation, though there were two people among the audience who could only sit and gaze fearfully at the radiant vision presented by the leading lady of the company.

"I take back my promise," hissed Valerie in Scarsdale's ear; "you have made a fool of me for nothing."

As for Scarsdale, he could find no words to answer her. Somehow Tucker had played him false, though he was never to know the true story of how his villainy had been defeated.

As for Tucker himself, we need concern ourselves no more with him. He had not earned his fifty pounds, though he had not come out the poorer by the transaction.

He was sensible enough to realise that it is best to let sleeping dogs lie, so he never made an effort to trace Amos White or to take revenge on the young sailor for having thus cavalierly broken his indentures and absconded with the *Susan Tucker's* longboat.

Portsmouth was to be the town next visited by *The Good Samaritan* Company. Here Jenny Lovelace was to pit her strength and woman's wit against a man whose cunning had been proved over and again and for Hazel Harlow's sake. How she fared in her enterprise will be told in a thrilling story in next week's *Short Stories.*

SHE: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for stealing a kiss." He: "But you are equally guilty, because you received the stolen goods."

SCENE: Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh. "Papa, who owns the Gardens?" "We do, my son," replied the boy's father, "we, the people. As a part of the people, James, we have a right to consider ourselves the owners. It is a glorious feature of our form of government, my boy," he continued, his eye kindling, "that the people are absolute. All property rights are based on their consent. All titles thus come from them and will finally revert to them. Here we have a right to come and rest from the toil and worry of life. We are on our own soil. To stroll at will, my boy, through these lovely——" "Hallo, there!" shouted a harsh, imperious voice. "Come off the grass, will ye, or I'll run ye in?" It was the voice of a policeman. "Come off the grass, James," said the father, meekly. "Princes' Street Gardens belongs to us, the people, but the grass belongs to the town council."

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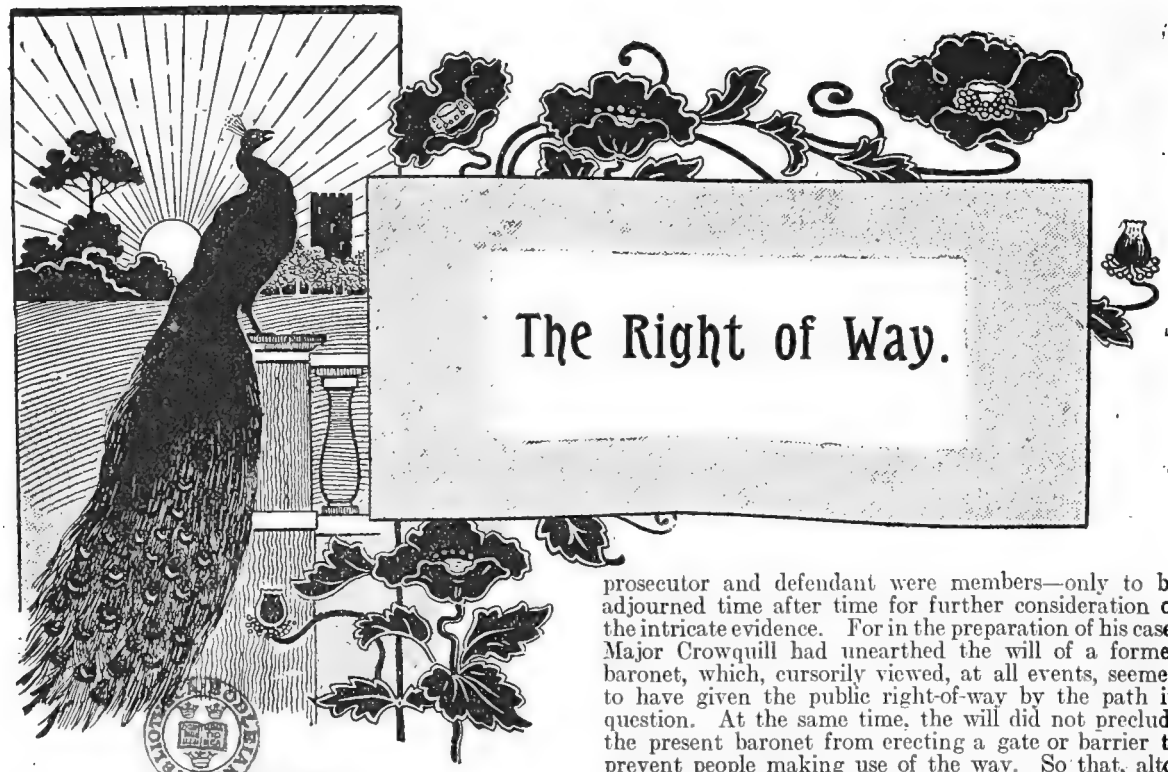

The Right of Way.

CHAPTER I.

Nobody understood the case, and nobody apart from the disputants held any definite opinion as to who was in the right. It is sufficient for present purposes to say that the disputants were respectively Major Crowquill and Sir Robert Bettany; and the subject of dispute the right-of-way by a path that led from Major Crowquill's garden gate and skirted a wood belonging to the other litigant.

The gallant major, more fiery surely than any other of his proverbially fiery rank, was a retired Mutiny campaigner, living on his half-pay in a picturesque old house in Kent with his daughter Dorothy and a couple of servants. Dorothy was just twenty, pretty as a picture, far more interesting to gaze upon, and imbued with the paternal pertinacity to just that degree which, wedded to winsome femininity, added to it so potent and subtle a charm.

Sir Gilbert Bettany, Bart., was handsome, rich, and thirty, of studious and retiring habits, and a most pronounced objection to the "other sex." Rarely going into society, and still more rarely receiving other than men friends, he had swathed himself with the reputation of a woman hater. That he would ever marry seemed an impossibility.

In the matter of the disputed pathway, Sir Gilbert had shown that he, too, could be obstinate or strong of purpose, according to the aspect in which his action was viewed. On the major persisting in the use of the contested path, the baronet had retaliated with a solicitor's letter, threatening a summons for trespass; and when the gallant officer, his blood stirred to boiling point, ignored the letter, the summons was duly served. The case had come before the county bench—of which both prosecutor and defendant were members—only to be adjourned time after time for further consideration of the intricate evidence. For in the preparation of his case, Major Crowquill had unearthed the will of a former baronet, which, cursorily viewed, at all events, seemed to have given the public right-of-way by the path in question. At the same time, the will did not preclude the present baronet from erecting a gate or barrier to prevent people making use of the way. So that, altogether, there was a pretty legal web, in which acuter brains than the average county magistrate's might easily become entangled.

The bench, after some dozen adjournments, decided that the case involved a question of the rights of property, and refused absolutely to deal with it. The upshot was that the case was set down for hearing in the Probate Court. So the lawyers went on writing letters and piling up big costs, and K.C.'s went on talking of precedents (which their "devils" looked up for them) and piling up bigger costs; and the case loomed darkly in the future.

Meanwhile, Major Crowquill and Sir Gilbert Bettany each sturdily maintained he was in the right—the former using the path, and the latter doing all he could to prevent him.

CHAPTER II.

Dorothy Crowquill loved her father. And perhaps her love for him was the more intense since there was no other masculine object on which she poured out her affection. She had never loved in the limited sense of the word—had never had a sweetheart, though her bright eyes and sunny hair had played the *rôle* of light to the impetuous human moths that exist in London society, seeking whom they may fall in love with. But Dorothy had returned with her father after her first brief London season, bringing her heart back, absolutely whole and unimpaired. Her only feeling was one of disappointment. Naturally somewhat romantic, she had in the secret recesses of her fluttering little heart, imagined that in town she might meet the fairy prince of her inmost thoughts—the hero, noble and brave and strong, whom she had conjured up in her fanciful brain. And, instead, she had met with a lot of shallowpates,

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with absolutely nothing of the hero in them; but ever ready to admire and flatter and flirt, to say idiotic nothings by the hour together, to treat and humour her like a child. Yes; undoubtedly Dorothy Crowquill was grievously disappointed.

As well as loving her father, she admired him; admired him for his sound intelligence, and above all, for his indomitable spirit, which, as we have already said, she inherited from him, in a diluted form. She admired resolution in a man; and, in the present case, she firmly believed her father to be in the right.

So it was with but little compunction that, one July morning, she took a walk along the disputed path. It was a lovely day. The sun in all its summer splendour was gilding the green of the trees whereon perched myriads of birds, singing their hearts out in thankfulness to Heaven for the happiness which was theirs.

Of part of this joy of living, Dorothy seemed at the moment to partake. As she tripped along, blithe as a lark herself, she too sang—or, rather hummed—the melody of a simple ballad which was a favourite with herself and her father.

Suddenly, however, she broke off, and halted. A bend in the path had brought her face to face with a gentleman seated on a gate. At her approach he looked up and frowned a little as he saw that it was a girl.

Neither spoke for a moment. Then, driven to speech by the awkwardness of the stare they were directing on the other, Sir Gilbert Bettany (for he it was) said:

"You may perhaps not be aware of it, but you are trespassing."

"I am aware you hold such to be the case," returned Dorothy icily; "but my father thinks differently. I believe my father."

The baronet was taken aback somewhat by this spirited reply. He gazed at his antagonist with curious eyes.

"You are Miss Crowquill, I perceive," he said.

Dorothy bowed distantly, and made as though to go on. Sir Gilbert Bettany, his woman hating spirit piqued at her demeanour, got off the gate and stood facing her.

"I am sorry," he said, "to appear to be impolite. But this is a question of principle, and I must insist on my right."

"If, in insisting, *you* intend to use brute force," Miss Dorothy retorted, her face flushing and eyes flashing with indignation, "I shall of course turn back. Otherwise *I* insist on my right to go on."

Sir Gilbert paused, astounded. What a girl this was! —so different from the dolls he met in society. Why, she had the spirit and will of a man! It was a revelation in womanhood. He looked at her again, and now there was distinctly something of admiration in his gaze. Disconcerted by the unflinching angry look of her big, beautiful eyes, he stammered out:

"Why, of course, Miss Crowquill, if *you* wish to go on, I—er—have no objection—not the least. Pray go on by all means."

"Thank you! I have no wish to be merely tolerated." Dorothy's eyes flashed defiance. The baronet looked on in surprised admiration at the girl's spirit.

"To suggest that I am capable of *tolerating* you," he said quietly, "is to make me feel guilty of gross impertinence. I am sorry to be impertinent." He glanced at her penitently.

"I am sure I do not mean to imply that you are," she replied, with relent in her tone. She rather liked his quiet, unassuming manner.

"It is kind of you to say so," he rejoined, with a ring of genuine sincerity in his tone. "I should never have forgiven myself if you had thought otherwise." He was dragging out the conversation. Dorothy pleased his sight, and he seemed to want her to tarry near. But she was already on the move.

"Good-day, Sir Gilbert Bettany!" she remarked, with just a touch of roguishness in her manner. "I am glad we have settled this wretched question of the right-of-way." And ere he could do more than acknowledge her adieu, she was well on her way along the disputed path. The baronet gazed after her, admiring the beautiful outlines of her figure till she disappeared round a bend in the path. Then, with wonder-set eyes, he sat down on a gate near by.

"She's a beautiful girl!" he said to himself, flicking his leg contemplatively with his stick. "She's better than that—she's a splendid woman. What spirit she has, and what dignity! By Jove, what a—Bah! here am I, known to all my friends as a confirmed woman hater, growing sentimental over the daughter of my arch-enemy. It was her eyes that beat me—they're beautiful eyes." He looked to dream for a moment. "And hang it all," he continued, pulling himself together, "she insisted on her *right* to use this path, and I tamely submitted! I don't mind, of course, but there's a principle involved. I'll have to talk to her quietly but firmly when I see her again."

While he was thus "audibly thinking" of her, Dorothy, in her turn, was thinking of him.

"It's strange that papa and he should be at loggerheads about this stupid path. He seems such a nice man. What a pleasant soft voice he has, and how polite and serious! So different from men who are always paying compliments and saying silly things. Perhaps I was a little bit rude in insisting on coming this way. . . . . But no! I mustn't let him, simply because he happens to be nice, make me alter my mind. Of course, papa is right, and if I happen to meet Sir Gilbert again, I must tell him, kindly but firmly, that I consider myself fully entitled to use this path whenever I choose."

CHAPTER III.

Although Sir Gilbert Bettany had shown himself (according to his own belief) a little weak in dealing with Miss Dorothy Crowquill, he was determined to maintain his claim to the disputed path.

Then the fat was in the fire! Hostilities were renewed.

And so, one day, in pursuance of this purpose, he had a strong five-barred gate erected, upon discovering which, Major Crowquill grew tempestuous in his wrath.

"Gate, is it?" he stormed. "He thinks he'll keep me out with a gate, does he? I'll show him!"

And duly the Major "showed" him. For at five o'clock one morning, he armed himself with a crowbar and sledge-hammer, and with his own hands demolished that five-barred gate beyond recognition.

Sir Gilbert Bettany issued a summons for wilful destruction of his property, and the Major promptly replied with a cross-summons for obstructing the public pathway. Previously there had been a very pretty legal tangle, and these later developments added to it. For

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the matter, being already *sub judice*, was fought shy of by the local bench, and both summonses were dismissed, each party paying his own costs.

This was equally unsatisfactory to both parties. The baronet immediately had a second gate erected, and anticipating a depredatory visit from the irate major, rose very early himself the next morning and sallied out to place himself on guard. In his hand he carried a hunting crop. He was going to take the law into his own hands should it be necessary.

Sure enough, as he got within earshot of the newly-erected gate, he heard through the trees the sound of blows, as of a hammer falling on iron bars. Evidently the major had got to work early. Sir Gilbert Bettany gripped his whip tighter and strode on quickly.

But what a sight met his eyes when he emerged from the coppice in full view of the gate! Instead of the fire-eating major whom he had expected, he beheld Miss Dorothy Crowquill, hatless and jacketless, swinging a sledge-hammer, and inflicting such blows on the gate as would not have discredited a blacksmith.

The baronet stopped dead with surprise. He had not foreseen this development, and was quite unprepared for it. He looked as if he would have liked the earth to open and swallow him up. Failing that, he did actually try a strategical movement back into the shelter of the trees.

But it was too late.

Pausing for a moment's rest from her task, Dorothy espied him.

"Ah! good-morning, Sir Gilbert!" she called out.

There was no indication of confusion in her manner. She was as composed as if she had merely been caught gathering a posy of flowers, instead of in the wanton destruction of another person's property.

"Good morning, Miss Crowquill!" He was actually blushing with bewilderment.

"You are an early riser, Sir Gilbert."

"Not so early as yourself apparently."

"Oh! I am up early this morning in order to get rid of this stupid gate which you have had put up. It is exceptional for me to be about so early as this."

"You think the object worthy of such a change in habit?"

"Oh, yes, certainly! You see, papa is laid up with an attack of gout, or he would have come himself. And he worried so much about not being able to do it, that in order to prevent him making himself worse, I resolved to destroy the gate myself."

She was punctuating her remarks with hammer-blows by this time. Sir Gilbert looked on amazed. Was ever such temerity known as this girl's? How strong she seemed! How supple her body was; how graceful the swing of her arms; what a lovely bloom the exertion put upon her cheeks! She paused again in her work.

"You put up very strong gates," she murmured. There was more than a suggestion of banter in her manner.

"Do I?" he answered slowly.

"Yes—awfully strong. I've been hammering at this silly old bar for ever so long—and I'm quite tired."

"Why not leave off, then?" he suggested.

"What! give up my task—never! papa would be awfully angry. No, I'll go on till I drop!" And she fixed both her beautiful eyes full upon the baronet.

Those eyes did for him. He made a step forward.

"Can I help you?" he enquired desperately.

"Oh! now that's very kind of you," and she handed him the hammer through the bent bars.

For the next three or four minutes the gate echoed to the ponderous blows which the baronet dealt it. When he paused to rest for a moment, his eyes sought those of Dorothy. There was a twinkle in the latter.

"Why are you smiling?" he asked.

"I can't help it," she replied. "It really is too funny!"

"What is?"

"Why, to think that you should take the trouble to erect this gate yesterday, and then help to destroy it to-day!"

She laughed merrily.

"Was there ever such inducement to destroy one's own property?" he asked.

"How do you mean?"

"I mean this, Miss Crowquill," he burst out; "that *you* asked me to do it. And there's nothing I wouldn't do for your sake."

"Sir Gilbert!" she dropped her eyes and blushed as she uttered the exclamation.

"Forgive me, Miss Crowquill!" He had dropped the hammer by this time, and was by her side, holding her hand.

"Forgive me—Dorothy! I love you—love you as I never dreamt a woman could be loved before! Will you—will you be my wife?"

Dorothy's head dropped lower, and she did not try to release herself from his arm, which somehow or other had stolen around her waist.

"Dorothy—say yes!"

She didn't say "yes," but she allowed him to kiss her; and there's a language in that sort of thing which even a woman-hater can understand. Sir Gilbert Bettany evidently understood it, and was satisfied. Furthermore, the language was repeated.

* * * * *

To the mild chagrin of the members of the legal profession engaged in the case, the famous right-of-way lawsuit suddenly came to an end, in consequence of a settlement having been arrived at.

The cause of that settlement became apparent a few weeks later, when the friends of the respective Bettany and Crowquill families began buying wedding presents. Major Crowquill doesn't quarrel with his son-in-law about the right-of-way now.

FIND OUT SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF.

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Inclose six penny stamps and a stamped addressd envelope with each specimen of handwriting.

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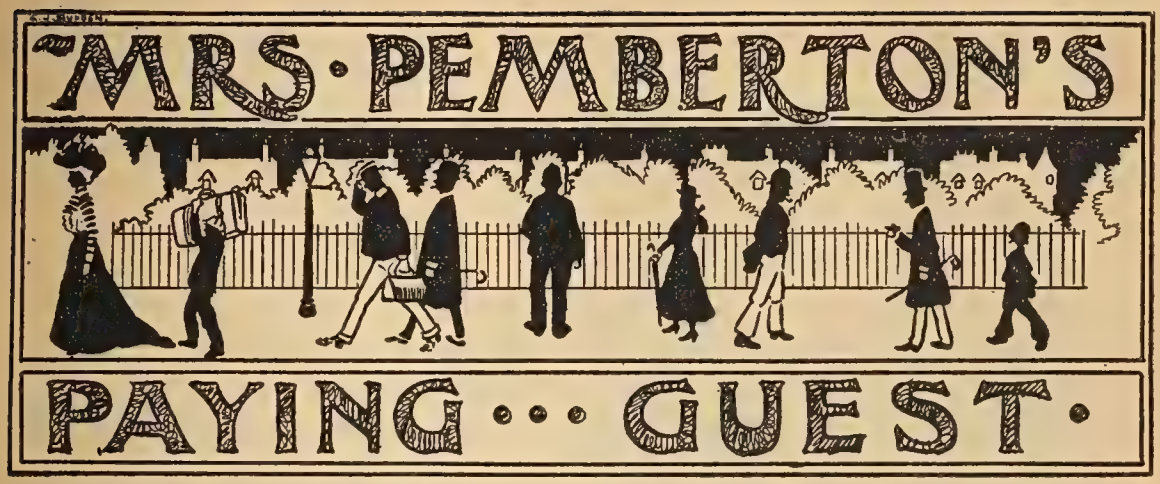

TO LADIES, Widowed or Single.—A lady with house (much too large for her own use), in good locality, and well furnished, would be glad to receive as a paying guest one or other as above.—Address, for terms, etc., Mrs. Pemberton, Dynevor Lodge, Eynesford Crescent, Bayswater, W.

"THE very thing! I'll investigate at once. It sounds all right. At any rate it's better than this!" and Freda Periera threw around a discontented look, expressed and emphasised by curling lip and contracted brow.

It was a private sitting-room on the third floor of the Hotel Cecil. Breakfast was upon the table, and it was an advertisement in the *Morning Post* that had attracted the lady's attention.

Young she was (eight-and-twenty or thereabouts), and passably good-looking, but her somewhat small, steely blue eyes had in them an over-shrewd, calculating expression, which, together with thin lips, tightly compressed as a rule, gave an unpleasant impression of hardness to most people with whom she came in contact.

Her dark skin and jet-black hair told of Southern blood, while her nervously quick movements implied that, as a daughter of the South, she had inherited its temperament in no small degree.

The father of Freda Periera had been a cadet of a certain noble house, whose principal ancestral seat is the glory of the North of England.

Extravagant—vicious even—he had been compelled, as the result of his own folly, to seek the Continent as a safe place of residence.

It was during a summer's sojourn at lovely Sorrento that he met the Italian girl whom, to her own sorrow, he ultimately married.

The daughter of a small wine-shop keeper in the outskirts of the town, one Carlo Periera, she could not, somehow, resist the persuasive tongue of the well-dressed, perfectly mannered Englishman.

Fortunately for herself, in one way, Carlo would permit no love-making for its own sake—no inconsequent, irresponsible flirting.

"You want," he said, "to marry my daughter—good! You only make your love to her, and then—pht!" and he made a significant snap of the finger in the direction of the road to the frontier. "Well, then I say 'No, Signior Inglese!' No, I, Carlo Periera, have my pride as have you 'milords,' and can claim the best blood in Italy for my own—*sì!* And so, signior, no! if you love only, and will not marry."

As Carlo Periera looked quite capable of not "saying" merely, but "doing," Arthur Delane clearly had but two alternatives.

He loved Margharita—after a fashion, and yet in such a way that he could not let her go.

He took her away, after the marriage, to Florence, where they contrived to live for the best part of ten years. Then Margharita died, and Delane, first consigning the little Freda, like any commercial package, to the care of Carlo Periera, disappeared, to be seen no more. Whether he died, or, indeed, what became of him, nobody knew, and, for the matter of that, nobody cared.

Brought up by her grandfather, the Italian part of Freda's nature greatly developed, save in that, much to the old innkeeper's disgust, she invariably spoke English.

One thing, however, Periera insisted upon, viz., that she should adopt his surname, her father's being, for obvious reasons, hateful to him.

When, just before the completion of her eight-and-twentieth year, Periera died, leaving her the bulk of his savings of fifty years, Freda rejoiced within herself that her time was come; the realisation of her life-dream was made possible; wealth, position, everything! might now be had for the trying for them.

That her legacy was considerable was evidenced by her manner of living in London, whither she had come after a brief stay in Paris.

Her main motive was undoubtedly matrimonial. Her money, she knew, would not last for ever, and she looked upon it, while it remained, to furnish her with the means of securing a good settlement.

Up to the present she had been unsuccessful; all her social ventures had turned out "fiascos," so that now when she was beginning to find that her resources were perilously near their end, she saw that she must make some supreme effort before disaster should render effort of any kind an absolute impossibility.

* * * * *

Eynesford Crescent is in the best part of Bayswater,

H. T. Johnson's new serial begins next week.

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"Some crank, I suppose, with nothing better to do than to stare at people."

close to Ladbroke Grove, in fact, Dynevor Lodge being one of the most desirable houses in it.

Mrs. Pemberton, the owner and occupier of the latter, was a quiet, refined lady of advanced middle age, and the widow of a distinguished general officer.

Two sons, one a sub-lieutenant in the navy, the other a military cadet at Sandhurst, lived with their mother when they were in London on leave; otherwise, with the exception of her servants, her life was companionless and solitary.

Some little while before the anticipated home-coming of her boys it had struck her that a paying inmate of the house, of her own sex, would benefit her in more ways than one.

In the first place, it would add materially to her income, which, never over large, had been depleted in no small measure by the sacrifices she had made for her children, the starting in life of whom had sadly crippled her means. The presence, too, of a lady would be much to her if the new-comer were in every way suitable, the prospect of even such companionship being, after her hermit-like existence, doubly pleasant.

"Miss Freda Periera."

So ran the card handed her about three o'clock on the afternoon upon the day on which the advertisement appeared in the *Morning Post*.

An account of the interview would not be particularly interesting; sufficient that both ladies were on the alert to make discoveries, and that both were in the end apparently satisfied.

For a time the arrangement seemed to work splendidly, then the rift appeared, and clouds began to gather.

Mrs. Pemberton, probably because she was altogether unused to the boarding-house business, even on a limited and a genteel scale, had, in spite of the polite fiction implied in the term "paying guest," somewhat hazy notions with regard to the "guest's" true position.

She evidently imagined that the monetary consideration she received gave a commercial complexion to the affair, while it as evidently necessitated a certain assumption of dignified stand-offishness on her part as toward her new acquaintance.

On the other hand, Freda Periera soon began to take liberties (or that which Mrs. Pemberton regarded as such), apparently forgetting, when high-handedly intruding her sugges tions, and even orders, that her hostess was the real head of the establishment, and that to take upon herself to usurp the domestic throne was at once a manifest proof of ignorance and of crass impertinence.

This forgetfulness, or, shall it be said, wilful blindness, led her into the perpetration of all sorts of unwarrant able things, to the vexation of Mrs. Pemberton, who bitterly regretted, when too late, having entered so hastily into the contract.

Like many another foolish woman before and since, she had, even on the very first day of Freda's appearance at Dynevor Lodge, acquainted her with all the salient points of the family history, quite unaware, poor soul, that Freda's tale of all that concerned herself was far from being a veracious chronicle; was, in fact, as highly coloured as could well be.

Among other things the fond mother, in expatiating upon her sons and their many good points, communicated the pregnant fact that the elder (the naval sub lieu tenant), would, upon attaining his majority in the f ll wing June, come into possession of an est te in Hertfordshire and a capital sum of £50,000, under the will of the la'e General Pemberton's brother, a large holder of "i Hudson's Bay" and "New River" stock.

It might, perhaps, have been fancy, but Mrs. P mber ton could not shake off the idea that Freda Periera had thoughts about this matter as from time to time she referred to the subject, getting as much information as she could upon it consistently with prudence

About a month after Freda's arrival at Dynevor Lodge, word came from Douglas Pemberton that he should leave the Naval Depot, Whale Island, P rtsea, that evening, and should, all being w ll, be at home some time during the morning of the next day. His letter con

H. T. Johnson's new serial begins next week

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cluded with saying that he had arranged with his brother Cecil to meet him at Clapham Junction, from whence they would journey home together.

Immediately after breakfast the following morning, Mrs. Pemberton was surprised to see her "guest" making preparation for going out.

"I may be away at luncheon time," said Freda airily, "so do not wait, please, as, perhaps, it will be three or half past before I return."

The other thought it strange, this early expedition, though why exactly she could not quite satisfy herself.

* * * * *

It was certainly a curious circumstance, a coincidence almost, that as the Portsmouth train steamed into the "Junction" a tall, sealskin-jacketted, foreign-looking lady should be on the platform awaiting its arrival.

When Douglas Pemberton sprang out of the carriage to greet his brother, who had arrived by another train, their meeting was observed and keenly noted by the lady in question; so closely, indeed, that it drew the attention of the two young men to her.

They could not plainly see her features owing to her thick veil, but they saw quite enough to be able to make out that for some reason the stranger was curious with regard to them.

"D'you know her?" whispered Cecil to his brother.

"Not from Adam!" returned Douglas. "Some crank, I suppose, with nothing better to do than to stare at people. But never mind her old cha! I'm as hungry as a hunter! We'll put the traps in the cloak-room for half an-hour while we see if we can get a chop at the buffet."

The woman must have overheard this, for she immediately descended the stairs, went outside, and, getting into a hansom, drove away westwards.

* * * *

The two young men arrived at the Lodge just after luncheon.

Mrs. Pemberton rather dreaded saying anything about the new inmate, and so postponed explanations until later on.

At dinner both Douglas and Cecil greeted the appearance of Freda at the table with well bred but genuine astonishment. The usual introduction conveyed, of course, no meaning. As the meal progressed Freda's manifest disposition to consider the house and all belonging to it as being hers equally with its legitimate mistress caused both boys to exchange puzzled glances of displeasure.

Who was she, this extremely forward individual? No friend and guest of their mother's would surely so far forget herself as to dictate in her hostess' presence and at the latter's own table! The good lady saw the dilemma she was in, and took the first opportunity after dinner to explain matters, if a trifle lamely.

"Yes, mother, that's all very well," said Douglas indignantly, "but neither I nor Cecil see any reason for your having a lady" (strongly emphasising the word) "as a paying member of your family."

"No, mother," said Cecil, "I don't like it, and I am sure Douglas doesn't, and——"

"My dear boys!" implored their mother, "do be reasonable! My life here is rather lonely, as I think you will admit, and I merely thought that if I could induce a lady to honour me with her company" (innocent deception, although I think the lads saw through it) "it would be pleasant for me and——"

"Well, but mother!" interrupted her eldest born, "you could have had cousin Dorothy up from Alnwick! She would have been only too glad to come."

Manager as well as mother, Mrs. Pemberton had her own reasons for not extending her invitation to the young lady.

Things went on in this way for the next few days, to

The usual introduction, of course, conveyed no meaning.

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Is your portrait here? If so, drop us a post-card, and get £5. Five more portraits will appear next week.

All claims in connection with the above portraits must reach the address already given above by Tuesday next, October 15th.

Full names and addresses of the people represented in each number will appear in succeeding numbers, whether the five pound notes are claimed or not.

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No. 11.

No. 12.

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the dissatisfaction of the boys, and to the discomfort and distress of their mother.

Of Cecil, Freda took hardly any notice; it was Douglas whose goodwill she angled for.

But Douglas was not to be caught. First impressions had been so unfavourable that a suddenly developed "angel," wings and all, would have quite failed to lure him to rise.

It was one day when she was dressed for going out and standing, deliberating about the weather, at the window, that it flashed across the young man's mind the strong resemblance of Freda's figure and general carriage to that of the lady upon the platform at Clapham. Even the long, loose sealskin was the same, and yet——?

"Why should she have been on the watch for me?" he mused. "I don't half like it, and I wish she would go."

He would have been still more eager for her departure had he but known that only that morning his mother had given her own open cheque for a crossed one for a large amount—£150.

"I think it will hold up," she said at last, turning towards him; "will you be good enough to see that a cab is got for me—a hansom, please."

Always polite, even to objectionable people, Douglas went out himself and procured a hansom.

Simultaneously with its arrival another cab drew up behind it, from which jumped a smart, spruce man.

Upon the steps Freda and the stranger met.

"Miss Freda Delane, otherwise Pereira," the latter said quickly but courteously. "Perhaps you will not mind returning indoors with me for a few moments."

"Why should I?" said Freda angrily. "I do not know you, sir! let me pass!"

But she had to comply, for the Scotland Yard messenger insisted upon having his way.

And then the truth came out.

Freda's money, with the exception of a few pounds, was exhausted when she left the Hotel Cecil, which she did, unfortunately for herself, as it turned out, without paying her bill.

This had set inquiries afloat, but when it transpired that the crossed cheque, given two days previously, was valueless, the matter became serious, and, a warrant being issued, Freda would have to answer for her misdeeds before a metropolitan magistrate.

It is never pleasant to witness the humiliation of any woman, and Mrs. Pemberton could not help feeling sorry for her, although she herself was a victim but, when, just before leaving with the detective, she turned and told her sometime hostess that she regretted more than anything else the failure of her scheme to entrap the affections of young Douglas, Mrs. Pemberton hardened her heart, and then and there vowed nevermore to do as she had done, but, if it was to be, to live a solitary life to the end of the chapter.

Photo Competition.

As we go to press several claims have come in. These will be immediately dealt with and reported upon next week.

In our next number, too, will appear the names and addresses of the originals of our second batch of portraits.

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KING'S EVIDENCE.

CHAPTER I.

The Deed and the Witness.

"Well, old chap, it's a bargain, then? You'll come out and join me as soon as you've got things fixed up a bit."

"Yes, in a month or so. But it's 'everybody for the shore' now. So long, Ewart! Be a good boy!"

"Here! one moment, Heath! Oonah! has she told you?"

"Oonah!—told me!—what?"

"Why, that she's promised to marry me!"

Masterman Heath stopped short at the top of the gangway, which sloped at an acute angle from the *Icelandic's* side to the quay, and down which he had made to move, in response to the hoarse warnings of ships' quartermasters and dock officials.

"I'll write you about it—what she says, I mean," he said at last, slowly, and in a peculiar, half-preoccupied way.

"Then you don't object, old fellow?" cried Eric, seeing that the other was moving down the incline.

"Why should I?" replied Heath, with a curiously set smile upon his always white face. "It will be all right! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

The gangways were unshipped and run back on to the quay; the *Icelandic* slid away from the granite kerb, and Eric Ewart, with a last energetic hand-wave to his friend on the outer fringe of the shore crowd, fairly faced, in the teeth of a strong head breeze blowing up the Mersey from the sea, a new life, with all its new and as yet unknown experiences.

* * * * *

"Massee Elic gone away—allee same ullee side?"

Masterman Heath started, and turned sharply, to find a grinning Chinaman at his elbow. There was nothing presumptious about this Celestial; sleek, suave, and, perhaps sly, he stood, his shoulders drawn up almost to his ears, his head trifle bent, a smile of peculiar meaning playing about the corners of his thin-lipped mouth.

"What the devil are you doing here? Didn't I tell you to wait for me at the hotel?"

"Me come—lookee after you. See Massee Elic go away Melica."

"Well, and now you have seen, what the wiser or the better are you—eh?"

"Me allee-light. Ming-Ho know something."

The crowd was still dense, watching the trail of black smoke from the funnels of the *Icelandic*, as it grew ever fainter and still more faint.

Heath signed to his companion to follow him out of the throng. The Chinaman, valet, and general factotum to the man who, some years before, had, in the city of Pekin, rescued him from the *cangur*—from a fate perhaps even worse—submissively obeyed.

Outside the dock gate Heath paused a moment, and bade the other take a note and a small packet which he gave him to a certain address in one of the branch streets on the Everton Road.

"Velly glood. What Felime you wantee me back?"

"As soon as you can get your errand done, you lazy rascal!"

To see the cringing attitude of the man, it might quite naturally have been supposed that Ming-Ho was perfectly under control; that his very soul, in fact, was not his own; but a glance caught of his wicked little almond eyes, half-veiled, watchful, would tell a different tale.

"Me goee velly quick," he said, slinking away.

A couple of hours afterwards, when his master arrived at the hotel, Ming-Ho was waiting, self-satisfied, smiling.

"You delivered the note?"

"You gave it into Miss Oona's own hand:?"

"Yes."

"Has she sent any message?"

"No."

"D——n!"

"You hearder gleat news, Massee Heath?"

"No! and don't want to hear it!—get out!"

"Big news—big lobbely—lite-hair soildier-man—ab 'im thloat clut."

Like a tiger, Masterman Heath, his features contorted and working convulsively, seized the Chinaman by the throat.

"You lying hound! Carry your big news elsewhere," he cried, shaking the man, till his teeth rattled again, and then flinging him from him with a force that sent him spinning across the room, to fall in a heap by the door.

At that moment, up through the open window from the street, sounded the raucous voice of an evening paper-boy.

"Murder!—General Ewart robbed and killed by burglars!—Murder!—Second extry—Murder!"

Ming-Ho, spite his bruises and his sore bones, watched the tall, elegantly-dressed figure by the window.

Heath seemed to be fascinated with the street-boy's cry. His fingers clutched the curtains. His face was whiter than Ming-Ho had ever seen it.

"What—what," he said at length, as if pulling himself together, "what did my sister do with the packet I sent her?"

"She gavee me it back."

"Where is it?"

Ming-Ho slowly, and apparently reluctantly, produced from his long, voluminous blue sleeve the packet in question. He extended it to Heath, who snatched it, and thrust it into his pocket.

More £5 notes to be given away. See page 466.

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"Now, go!" he said savagely. "Be here in an hour's time—an hour—do you hear?"

"Me hear—but—Massee Heath, me wantee tell you one little thing."

"Well."

"Day say—one piecy lite paper pollis man foun'—and and——".

"Well."

"Too—one piecy hankchief—foun'."

Mechanically Heath's hand *went up to the breast pocket of his coat.*

Half-an-hour later Ming-Ho might have been seen in the close, reeking atmosphere of a tumble-down opium shop in the seafaring quarter of the town. He was in—for a Chinaman—eager talk with an old compatriot, the proprietor of the den.

It was not easy to hear what they said, they spoke so low, and with their heads so locked together across the dirty table, but in Ming-Ho's hand was something which evidently had intimate reference to the matter under discussion.

It was a *white cambric pocket handkerchief, with, in one corner, the initials* M. H. *worked in crimson silk.*

CHAPTER II.

Craft and Subtlety.

Masterman Heath was a man who, from his first entry into life had been selfish, extravagant, reckless. Possessing originally a fair fortune he had dissipated it in living, riotous beyond the average.

From pecuniary embarrassment to Shylock's office was the inevitable short step. Deep in the money-lender's books, threatened with bankruptcy or even worse, there came a day when he stood pantingly at bay. Turn which way he would, disgraceful liabilities, debts of honour (so-called), and writs without end, hedged him in on every side.

Although most men suspected, and, in course of time, fought shy of him, strange to say, two people—a man and a woman—believed him, loved him even.

His friend, Eric Ewart, the son of an old and distinguished Indian General, was one of those splendid fellows one sees but once or twice in a lifetime.

Associated as he had been with Masterman Heath in many of his mere gaieties, he had absolutely taken no part in the latter's more vicious amusements, and this because of Heath's secretive system in this particular, his companions in debauch being of his own kidney, and alike to him in inclination.

Yet was Eric Ewart no milksop; no apron-string, sawney-brain, but a fine, healthy-minded, athletic young giant, whom it would be well-nigh impossible to pass in the street without envying and admiring. Loyalty was as the breath of his nostrils; and to his friend he was loyal as Jonathan of old.

Oonah Heath was the only living creature of his own blood left to the untameable sprendthrift.

Beauty might be denied her, and, perhaps with justice, but the sparkle and intelligent expression in eye and mouth were undoubtedly hers in rare abundance, making a more than beautiful woman of her. Her loveableness was on a par with Eric's loyalty; in fact, the two attributes were manifestly interchangeable; her love being loyal, and his loyalty having about it the true essence of tender appreciation.

Oonah's affection for her brother was, in its motherly protectiveness, the very sweetest thing about her. He played upon this feeling, utterly ignoring the sacredness of it, and making her to believe in him even as an "angel of light."

On the morning of the day before Eric sailed for the "West" in quest of fortune, Masterman Heath had had a somewhat unpleasant interview with Shylock, otherwise Mr. Isaac Hyman, financial agent, of Sackville Street, Piccadilly.

Heath, who was really staying with the Ewarts at their country place near Chester, had run up to town the night before on pressing business. He hoped to be able to return to Combe Court by the midday following, but was ,owing to an accident, unable to do so.

Eric had already left his home two days previously, and to avoid unnecessary pain to both sides, was going on straight to Liverpool, where Heath was to meet him at the Adelphi.

Out towards Everton Oonah lived, as companion to a wealthy old maid, who simply worshipped the girl. Eric, before Heath's arrival, had run out to the Cedars to whisper his "farewells." He had also been successful, as has been said, in getting from her an avowal of her love for him. They had known one another nearly as long as he had known her brother; the first occasion of their meeting having been the "bumping" festival on the Isis. That was a long while ago now; when the two young men were freshmen of "Corpus," but neither Eric nor Oonah ever forgot that "birth-time of love."

Masterman Heath's experience the morning which saw the leave-taking by Eric of his sweetheart, was not so enviable, or so pleasant.

On reaching his chambers he found, to his rage and mortification, a man in possession at Mr. Hyman's suit.

Hurrying round to that gentleman's office, he endeavoured but vainly, to soften, and to conciliate him. But the time had now come for the cutting-up of the quarry—the day of grace was passed.

"I shall have some money in a week or ten days, and will then redeem the securities."

"Won't do—won't do. I've lost a lot lately, and must realise, sir—realise. Besides, I'm inclined to put but very little faith in that 'money next week' of yours."

"What do you mean?—you—you——"

"Steady on, my good Mr. Heath; steady on. No hard words, please. The distress must remain in. If you can pay it out within, say, a week from to-day, good—if not, good again—for me."

"You're a swindling old rascal! and——"

"May I ask what you are, Mr. Masterman Heath? These securities you speak of, and which I hold, I have strong reasons for believing to be—well, not quite genuine. More fool me, perhaps, for being so ready to take and lend on them. Anyway, I'm having them examined to-day by an expert, so that—we shall see—we shall see."

"Oh, you want to frighten me, do you? Well you can't, and won't."

"That's as it may be," calmly, and even smilingly, observed the moneylender. "If you know they're all right, why, you've nothing to be afraid of."

"Rot! Who said I was frightened? What I want to know is, what the devil this man is in possession for? Your claim is liberally covered by the—the securities."

"'Um! How about the nearly twelve months' arrears of interest?"

"Well—you will have to withdraw your man."

Surely that's your photo on page 466?

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Again that echo of a sound—this time it was like to a rustle of silken garments.

"I shall do nothing of the kind; and what is more, I should advise you, Mr. Masterman Heath, to look very carefully to yourself, for, unless I much mistake me, other folk will soon be looking anxiously after you."

Heath then left Sackville Street and proceeded to his own rooms. Here he put together some papers, and a few extra clothes, packing them pell-mell in a large portmanteau.

The bailiff's man dared him to remove anything, but, tipping the law's representative a sovereign, Heath walked out with the spoil, got into a hansom, and was driven to Euston.

When he arrived at Combe Court they were just sitting down to dinner. There was no one present beyond the old General, his daughter Margaret, and a young fellow to whom the latter was engaged to be married.

Dinner over, Heath, who when Eric had been there, had invariably sought the billiard-room, sat moody and silent, scarce vouchsafing even barely courteous replies to his host's genial remarks.

General Ewart could not but notice this, and, in the spirit of sympathy, ventured a word or two in kind inquiry as to his guest's health, for he certainly looked to be either physically or mentally upset.

In the course of conversation the elder man incidentally referred to the fact that, in the house, just returned from the London jewellers after resetting, were the famous Ewart diamonds.

"When I go up to bed, Heath, you shall see them if you like, and will come with me up to my room. It's a big responsibility, you know, to have a hundred and fifty thousand pounds' worth of crystallised carbon on the premises, though I don't think there is much danger of losing them, when all my precautions are considered."

Heath quite agreed with him, assuring him also that he would much like to see the stones.

They were in a way historic, a certain necklet in the collection having once belonged—so ran the story—to the notorious Countess of Essex; the slayer of Sir Thomas Overbury in the time of the first James, and an ancestral connection of the Ewart family.

It was nearing midnight when the two men stood by the table in General Ewart's room, inspecting, by the light of a reading lamp, the wondrous Ewart heirlooms. The old gentleman, who was marvellously independent and resourceful for his age, had no personal attendant, and was never disturbed by any one after once retiring.

Heath, in view of an early departure the next morning—he was to leave before five—had dismissed his Chinese servant for the night.

It was a peaceful household, it seemed to Heath, as, the large case containing the gems in one hand, he fingered the scintillating ornaments with the other.

"Dead to the World" begins next week.

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A devilish idea took possession of his brain, the consequences were nothing to him, he could not realise them.

His one thought was that he was ruined, completely and irretrievably ruined, and that—Faugh!—It was madness!

Then he fancied that he could detect a sound, but, save for his companion's somewhat sleepy comments, all was silent as death almost.

He must have been mistaken.

By the side of the huge, old-fashioned four-poster, there was a safe, or iron-lined closet rather, in the wall panelling. In this, papers, jewels, plate, and other valuables were in the habit of being stored for safety.

It was a foolish practice, but the master of the house had venerable notions on most matters, and in this preferred to be his own custodian of the family treasures.

As midnight chimed from the clock on the mantelpiece; and, as Heath, laying down the case upon the table looked strangely down upon the bent head of the old man, who proceeded to close the lid, the door of the safe stood wide open; the black, forbidding recess appearings uggestively grim in the semi-darkness of the room.

Again that echo of a sound—this time it was like to a rustle of silken garments.

A quarter past twelve!

The safe door *closed;* the table, save for a couple of books, bare as one's naked hand—and—the room was *empty!*

On the floor, by the table-leg is a half sheet of white paper, once folded, with, scrawled upon it in a woman's handwriting:

"Dear Boy,—Rehearsal will be over by two-thirty to-morrow; fetch me, and we'll go to Richmond. Ever yours,

ANGELA."

"Eric Ewart, Esq."

Also on the floor is a man's white cambric handkerchief—but before the half hour strikes—*it is gone.*

CHAPTER III.

"MINE OWN FAMILIAR FRIEND."

NOT a little public excitement was caused by the newspaper announcement—two days after the murder at Combe Court—that an extradition warrant for the apprehension of Eric Ewart had been applied for and granted.

It certainly seemed a slight thread upon which to hang a charge of parricide; a letter dropped and found on the scene of the crime.

But people remembered the old proverb concerning "great issues," and "little causes" and were, on the whole, disposed to believe that the son might have killed his father for the sake of the diamonds, which had disappeared.

That ninety-nine folks out of a hundred did not know the man sufficiently well to be absolutely sure that he could *not* have done this thing, was no argument in his favour with the general public. With the usual outsider's way of taking, and looking at things, the large majority were inclined to let the pros unduly weigh down the cons in the case.

Then it was whispered that a material witness for the prosecution was to be produced in the person of the intimate personal friend of the accused man's. What he would say, was, of course, only conjecture, but that it would be something startlingly sensational people were convinced.

What influenced Masterman Heath to proffer his testimony it is hard to say. That his action brought contumely and scorn upon him is certain, and by no means unnatural, for even a callous public hates an informer, be he gilt-edged, or fustian clad.

It was a letter, however, he received from his sister, that first made him to see himself as he really was. Not that he repented the step he was about to take, his own safety demanded it, for, as a matter of fact, Oonah's words but hardened him the more.

"You say," she said, "that you have proof of Eric's guilt; and that, in the interests of justice you intend proclaiming it in open court. At least one woman does not believe you—your own sister; the daughter of *your* mother, tells you that you lie; that, for your own purposes—your own wicked purposes—you are seeking by a false and perjured statement to sink your friend in order that you may swim. Should you do this; should one hair of Eric Ewart's head be hurt by any word of yours, from that moment I renounce you. Forgetting that we once lay upon the same breast, and drew the same milk, I will give you over to other mercy—for mine will be dead."

The letter was not signed, but it needed not Oonah's name at its foot to stamp its origin.

His inclination was to burn it, but a power which he could not resist, compelled him to retain it in his possession.

Within the fortnight, Eric Ewart arrived at Liverpool in charge of a "Yard" inspector. As he stepped, unironed, on to the same quay from which he had so recently embarked, Oonah, tear-eyed, but with a brave smile illuminating her face, pressed up to him. Officialism mildly protested, but gave way on the condition that the interview lasted but a moment.

In the shelter of the Customs shed he stood, with her hands holding his.

"My darling! this is good of you, but you must not stay here—you must not in any way be mixed up in this dreadful business. Of course you do not credit this cruelly absurd charge?"

"Credit it! No!—no!—no!—and a thousand times —no!—"

"Then all will be well! Mr. Saville!" (to the inspector) "will you so far oblige me as to let one of your men see Miss Heath safely on her road home."

The inspector would, and did. The trip from New York had awakened doubts in his mind, though as yet he could not formulate or explain them.

"Good-bye, then, dear! I shall be in London nearly as soon as you are."

"You must not, Oonah! You must not! You must leave me to bear this alone."

"And *you* must leave me to do—as I cannot but do. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

* * * * *

The preliminary examination did not occupy much time. Two formal remands, and the unhappy young man was committed for trial.

The prosecution did not call their principal witness, Masterman Heath, during the magisterial proceedings; they simply proved the finding of the body in the safe; the way in which death had been inflicted, and the finding of the incriminating letter.

H. T. Johnson's new serial begins next week.

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The letter was read; Eric's protest that it was not his; had never been written to, or received by him, and that he was altogether unacquainted with anyone of the name of Angela, being duly recorded. He was, however, advised to reserve any such defensive statements for the day of his trial.

* * * * *

On the day of committal, in a disreputable haunt of Chinese seamen, situate in one of the narrow streets round about the Home for Asiatics, in the West India Dock Road, Ming-Ho, Masterman Heath's quondam body-servant, who had been utterly lost sight of ever since the night of the murder, might have been seen calmly lying on a bunk-bed, smoking, and thinking profoundly.

In one hand he held a cambric handkerchief, which every now and again he would survey with intense satisfaction.

It was noticeable that every time any one passed him, he shot his unoccupied hand under his pillow. On one such occasion he drew forth a packet wrapped in a dirty piece of linen. It was not very large, being about six to eight inches in length, by two inches in depth and breadth. It was tied round with strands of spun-yarn, such as sailors use.

By the loving way in which he looked at and stroked it, there was evidently something of value in the package.

Satisfied as to its present safety he returned it to its place under the pillow, and resumed his contemplation of the handkerchief.

"Ah! Massee Heath; you allee same clever man, but Ming-Ho, he beat you! he lick you—he makee you sweat."

Muttering this with variations, over and over again, he got tired of his occupation and rose up.

Taking the package from under the pillow, hiding it carefully in the breast of his jacket, and giving the wretched-looking Chinese proprietor of the place a small coin, he went out, setting his face westward.

* * * * *

In the dock of the old court at the Old Bailey, stands Eric Ewart, indicted for the murder of his father, General Ewart.

It was remarked by those in court, professional and others, that a man looking less like a parricide it would be hard to find.

Upright, honest-eyed, he faced his judge, who with the experience of a long lifetime spent in reading human derelicts, hesitated before placing this man in the category.

The procedure of a criminal trial is generally monotonous, and reported in somewhat dreary reading. The chief events in connection with this particular case, therefore, will be all that it is needful to transcribe.

The evidence taken before the magistrate having been recapitulated, the name of Masterman Heath was called.

As he stepped into the box, he kept his eyes turned away from the prisoner.

But the counsel for the prosecution's first question compelled him to look round.

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?"

Slowly lifting his eyes to a level with Eric's, he strove to speak. But it was as the convulsive moving of the lips of a dumb man. Not a sound came.

"Witness," said the judge, "you hear the question: answer it."

Still Eric's eyes looked searchingly into his, paralysing the power in him of speech and connected thought.

White to ghastliness, his lips refused to utter the elaborate lie which he had come there to speak.

"My lord," said the prisoner's counsel, springing to his feet. "As the prosecution can make nothing of their witness, I wish, with your consent, to put a man into the box who has, within the last hour been arrested within the precincts of this court as an accessory before the fact in this case."

A five minutes consultation with the Treasury solicitor and the judge speaks.

"Stand down, witness; see that Masterman Heath does not leave the court. Now, Mr. Smith, call your King's Evidence."

Escorted by two policemen, Ming-Ho gets into the box. The saucer is broken, according to the Chinese custom of swearing a witness.

"You know the prisoner?"

"Yes, me know him."

"Where were you at twelve o'clock on the night of the 23rd of October?"

"In soldier man's room, allee same sleepy place."

"In the house where your master, Mr. Masterman Heath was staying—eh?"

"Yes."

"What were you doing in that room?"

"Me lookee round like—Me see what Massee Heath do."

"And what did he do?"

"Massee Heath, he lookee at dlimons with ol' soldier man."

"Well!"

"Then, Massee Heath, he knock old soldier man down; club 'im thloat."

"Well!"

"Then he take 'im body; puttee in wall, put bittee plaper on floor, an' go away."

"And you, what did you do?"

"Before the case proceeds further secure the person of Masterman Heath," said the judge.

"And you, what did you do?"

"Me pickee up hanklechief."

"This is it, my lord, and it bears the initials M.H."

* * * * *

That night, when released, Eric Ewart sits in a room in a quiet hotel near the river, with, as his companions, his sister Margaret, and the girl whose love for him will ever be tinged with a great sorrow; he realises for the first time the depth out of which he has come.

There are not many words between these three, for the thankfulness they each feel is too deep for words.

* * * * *

Masterman Heath never recovered the shock of his terrible but righteous exposure. He died before even the completion of the preparations for his trial.

* * * * *

Ming-Ho, King's Evidence, was returned to his native land as an undesirable addition to the population of this country, but he left behind him the little dirty packet containing the Ewart diamonds. He had rung the changes when carrying the letter and parcel from Heath to his sister. The dastardly attempt to shift suspicion and risk by getting Oonah to take temporary care of his spoil, failed as we know. Oonah never can quite explain why she returned the packet, for *then* she knew nothing. It was an inspiration, and both Eric and she are to-day heartily thankful that it was born and acted upon.

More £5 notes to be given away See page 466.

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The Golden Dwarf

A Sensational Romance of To-Day.

By R. NORMAN SILVER.

Author of "A Keeper of Secrets," "Hate, the Destroyer," "A Daughter of Mystery," etc.

CHAPTER XLIII. *(continued).*

Otto Hare gnashed his teeth. "Curse you!" he said; "why do you remind me of Esther Carew when I am leaving her, perhaps for ever? You promised to be my fairy god-father; I told you you would prove an evil demon. Why did I ever meet you, why did I ever espouse your fiendish science!"

"Ha-ha," laughed Kraft, as he descended, "I was destined to play Mephistopheles to your Faust, my friend. And lo, I vanish, like my prototype, ha-ha!"

With a second rumble of sardonic laughter he went down the steps and they heard him grope into the corridor below. As he did so Michael Brasher and the two constables sprang from the upper section of the spiral staircase to the concrete floor and darted towards the Golden Dwarf.

"I arrest you, Otto Hare," said the Inspector, "on the charge—" he hesitated; on what accusation was he to apprehend the strange person before him? It would have taken a better lawyer than Mr. Brasher to formulate the exact offence Otto Hare's and Joseph Kraft's ghastly researches amounted to. Doubtless it would have been sufficient to accuse him of harbouring Brian Dering, knowing the child to have been stolen. But Felix Dering had frankly asserted that neither Kraft nor Hare was acquainted with the identity of their victim!

In the midst of the Inspector's perplexity, Felix Dering strode forward. "On the charge of being concerned," he supplemented, "with one Joseph Kraft, in compassing the death of Sir Christopher Dering. I accuse him, Inspector, and I demand that he be arrested on that charge and on no other."

A shrill cry broke from the Golden Dwarf's lips and his sallow skin blanched with fear.

"*That!*" he shrieked; "never, never!—I will not be taken I tell you. You shall not take me—I will die as he died!"

Otto Hare, trembling and unnerved, doubled back, leapt to the purring dynamos, and dropped his hands on the copper brushes that were picking up the tremendous current required for more than half a score of arc lamps. His tiny body was thrown into the deadly circuit, the huge voltage passed through brain and muscle, and, with a convulsive shudder, the Golden Dwarf terminated his existence. The corpse remained a stiff and galvanised shape, upright beside the dynamos. The on-lookers were paralysed with astonishment.

While they stood, lost in horror, the silky tones of Joseph Kraft made themselves audible. He was singing a snatch of his favourite song—the song of Mynheer Jacob van Artevelde.

"'We all must ride outlandt,'"
rolled the smooth bass,
"'And drive our way to Bruges town,
Or Brussels in Brabant.'"

The song halted, the door of the corridor below was bolted sharply, and the German's voice called up the trap a guttural sentence in his own tongue.

When the words fell on the ear of his countryman Zorn, that gentleman took one leap in the direction of the outer exit.

"A thousand fiends," he whispered back; "the doctor has been connecting his mines. He has half a dozen laid in readiness for such an emergency. Fool that I was to forget. Out of this, all of you, if you would not be blown to the stars."

Michael Brasher was brave, but he ran, Archibald Geddes was no coward, yet he hurried. As for the two constables, they were already crossing the threshold, apparently pursuing Zorn, in reality fleeing for their lives.

Felix Dering followed—more leisurely. He judged himself safe while Kraft tarried. From the inner doorway he saw the German rise from the trap, push the staircase into position, and turn about to reach his cage of birds.

"Now, Otto," he exclaimed, "we will be off."

The phrase failed on his lips—he was glaring at the body of the Golden Dwarf. "Sakerment!" he cried; "Otto, what have you done?"

He was answered in a ringing voice—the voice of Felix Dering. "Cheated the gallows," Kraft was told, "but you shall not."

Felix flung himself upon Kraft, and young, athletic, resolute, forced the giant German out into the open air. The night was cool and quiet—the yellow glow from the tower portal swept across it like a band of sunshine.

Joseph Kraft realised his strength as he was thrust down the hill. With a colossal effort he flung off his captor's grip.

"My birds!" he cried; "my birds—I have forgot them; they will be killed."

He dashed back and re-entered the tower. Suddenly there came a sullen roar, a blinding flash of flame, the ground felt as if it had split beneath the feet of Felix Dering, and the entire observatory of the Golden Dwarf shot skyward in a hurtling mass. Joseph Kraft's mines, for some mysterious reason, had exploded prematurely.

The shock projected Felix down the green slope into some underwood, and he pitched upon a soft yet bulky object—the form of Michael Brasher.

"Got him," gasped the Inspector and hung on like a vice.

Surely that's your photo on page 466?

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"Am I to be rearrested, then?" queried Felix, imperturbably. Brasher groaned.

"I thought you were Zorn," said the Inspector, struggling to breathe; "the beggar has escaped. What's become of Kraft?"

Felix caught a glimpse of the last fragments of the shattered tower and the secret laboratory as they rained back into the abyss carved by the unknown explosive of Joseph Kraft.

"He has expiated his crimes," was Felix Dering's answer; "or, rather, to be honest, he has fallen a victim to his one virtue!"

Michael Brasher stared, as he summoned his men to prosecute the search for the missing Prussian. The echoes of the explosion were still vibrating about them.

CHAPTER XLIV.

The Last Chapter.

"And you have known that all this time, Mr. Dering! But why not have acted on it. Surely you could have done something."

Felix Dering shook his head gravely as he took the scrap of paper which Archibald Geddes had been studying and laid it down on the library table beside the scratched riding-whip that had belonged to the dead Sir Christopher.

"It was not a proof," he said, "apart from confirmatory evidence. For that I was seeking. But not for a moment did the real explanation of the mystery enter my head."

The chemist's assistant reached to the slip again and scanned it thoughtfully by the wan radiance of the fading day. It was covered with some seven or eight short lines of capital letters divided by brackets. They read:

[DON'T] EXPECT TO GET OUT OF [THIS PLACE] ALIVE. IF NOT, [MY] DEATH IS DUE TO [KRAFT. HARE] HANGS BACK BUT [KRAFT SAYS] OATH [OF SECRECY] OR DEATH. I WILL NE[VER BE A PARTY TO THEIR] VILE [PRACTICES.]

"The letters in brackets," added Felix, were at first illegible. The words they form fell, on the whip-handle, generally under one another, and had suffered from being ground into some gravelly substance. But, by the aid of your glass, I deciphered them. Originally I had thought that the K in the former occurrence of the name Kraft was an F, and directed my suspicions towards the man Foley."

"Sir Christopher must have become cognisant of the experiments being carried on at Wyresdale Park," commented Geddes, relinquishing the copy of the scratched lettering; "that accounts for their disposing of him. But why was Spencer kidnapped from the cell at the police-station. He was aware of nothing."

"He had said," observed Felix, "that he had seen a man like Sir Christopher on a led horse, that night near the cross-roads. Kraft must have feared that he might be able to identify the leader—doubtless Kraft himself."

"Then there only remains one question," pursued the Scotchman, "since your experiences in London solve the problem of Sir Brian's appearance at Wyresdale Park—and that is the manner of Sir Christopher's death. You noticed, of course, Mr. Hare's strange cry, 'I will die as he died.'"

"Yes," answered Felix; "it conjures up innumerable horrors, but it tells us nothing. Has Brasher any news of Zorn? He is probably the sole living repository of the dreadful secret."

"No," said Archibald Geddes; "the country has been scoured from end to end but without result. You have heard, I suppose, that Miss Garland has been released."

"By order of the Treasury, yes," was the reply. "Everything is believed against her, but my evidence of her confession to me goes for nothing in the absence of Neal, her brother, whose villainous epistle to Brasher contrived to implicate, so adroitly, me, the innocent, and her, the guilty. She is in the house now, I understand, packing her belongings. Lady Dering, who will neither judge nor acquit her, has refused to see her."

Geddes lifted his hat from a chair. "How is Sir Brian this evening?" he asked sympathetically.

"Failing fast," said Felix, and choked over the response. "He is dying of no particular affection. Confinement, cocaine, depression, and that cursed light."

The chemist's assistant ground his teeth. "It is horrible to think of," he muttered; "but I am sure Kraft was mad—he died to save those birds he meant to take away with him, yet he could torture little children."

"Science digs grim pitfalls for its votaries," rejoined Felix, heavily, and shook hands with his visitor.

Geddes coughed. "They're saying in the village," he ventured, "that Miss Carew and you are to be married quietly next spring. Mrs. Carew is putting it about in her own fashion. If it's not too melancholy a season on account of Sir Brian, I should like to congratulate you. Time was when I misunderstood you; now I think you're worthy of her, worthy of one another."

Felix smiled sadly. "She has come through much for my sake," he replied; "I am to make her mine at last. You and Miss Forester, I hear, are to become man and wife at an earlier date. I hope you will be happy."

The Scotchman wrinkled his brows. "If old Forester will either sign the pledge or drink himself to death in three months," he said morosely, "we'll be happy enough. Not otherwise. Good night to you, sir."

Felix rang, and Mr. Geddes was escorted out, a rather disconsolate Benedict-to-be. As the door closed behind him, Felix crossed to the further side of the room to look out at the waning afternoon—the autumn day had been stormy and was setting in a sullen calm. He opened the French window and stepped on to the terrace, lighting, as he did so, a cigar—that masculine comfort in griefs both large and small. Brian Dering was dying, and the heart of his cousin was sore, though the death of the child baronet meant to him rank and wealth.

He paced this way and that, lost in sorrowful reverie. Suddenly, as he neared the extremity of the terrace, a dark form rose from a clump of rhododendrons.

"Don't be alarmed, sir," it begged; "I want a word with you—for a good object. You'll be well advised to hear me out."

Felix stared—excited, yet incredulous. The figure before him was that of the Prussian, Johann Zorn, the colleague of Joseph Kraft in his infamous researches and the man whom the Derbyshire police-force had been hunting for a week or more. He was ragged, dirty, dishevelled, yet withal cool and self-possessed.

"If you summon help," said the Prussian; "you can only get me a term of imprisonment, for what your law would describe as 'cruelty to children.' Nothing else can be proved against me. Yet, if you will promise to aid me to get abroad, Mr. Dering, I will enable you to vindicate yourself against the slander which Dr. Kraft and Mr. Hare helped to circulate. I will tell you how your uncle died—by some singlar means, I gathered on that exciting evening, you had learned the identity of his murderers. Only I can inform you how he came by his end."

"What do you wish me to do?' asked Felix, perplexedly.

"I want money," said the other: "fifteen or twenty pounds will get me out of England. I have cheated

H. T. Johnson's new serial begins next week.

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your police so far and I will cheat them the rest. But I must wait till the pursuit has weakened, I must disguise myself, and bribe—a trifle. For these I must have money. I have tried to catch you alone for days, and now, when I had abandoned hope you appeared spontaneously before me."

Felix pondered. "Your explanation will be no use to me," he demurred; "it would not be evidence, except as a sworn confession from your supposed death-bed, or from your lips in court. The former is impossible, the latter would mean your arrest!"

Zorn wringing his hands. "Curse your law," he snarled: "then give me a sovereign or two and I will take my chance. Only, in return, you shall know how Sir Christopher Dering died. If you refuse I must fight you for my life."

Counting out half a dozen gold pieces on the stone balustrade of the terrace, Felix Dering indicated them with a gesture. "There they lie," he answered; "tell me your story and they are yours."

The Prussian stretched out a hungry palm, but withdrew it slowly, to begin his rapid narrative.

"Sir Christopher," he said, "being late that evening, rode across the park for a short cut and, doing so, came upon Dr. Kraft and I. We—we were burying one of the dwarfs—the original occupant of the blue cell in which Mr. Geddes found Sir Brian. He saw too much, was curious, and we took him into the tower, to discuss the situation the better, and sent for Mr. Hare from the house."

Zorn stopped. "I've been without food for twenty-four hours," he declared huskily; "give me a cigar."

Felix obeyed—with a feeling of profound revulsion. But he dare not lose the chance of probing the mystery that had so shadowed his happiness. The Prussian lit the Havana and sucked at it greedily.

"Your uncle," he proceeded; "would not hear reason—though Mr. Hare showed him all and explained the probable value to mankind of the researches the Doctor was making. He threatened to denounce us the moment he was free. As he knew not only of the experiments but that one of our subjects had succumbed we should be indicted for constructive murder—at least, so Dr. Kraft said. The Doctor decided that he must die. You will not believe that I tried to save him but I did. In vain. Dr. Kraft and Mr. Hare chloroformed him by force, and killed him—as an experiment—by an electric shock. Hence your post-mortem revealed nothing—the appearances of a skilful execution by electricity are those of suffocation; we German medical jurisconsults know that."

Zorn paused—to enjoy the flavour of his Havana; Felix wrestled with a violent inclination to strangle him.

"To lend colour to the idea of suffocation," went on the Prussian; "a handkerchief was tied over his mouth and nostrils and his skull was fractured by Dr. Kraft, as part of a suggestion of highway robbery. For this purpose his watch and jewellery, as well as his purse, were taken, and he himself, stiff in the early rigor of an electrical death, was mounted on his horse and conveyed to the cross-roads. The rest you know—it was because we feared that Spencer might have seen more than even rumour stated that we kidnapped him, Dr. Kraft and I, late one night, with the assistance of a borrowed ladder and a crowbar. I entered the cell, injected morphia, and passed him up to the Doctor outside."

The Prussian broke off in his whispering. A white figure showed itself at one of the French windows of the library, and a soft voice called into the dusk.

"Felix," it said; "is that your cigar-end I see?"

There was a tinkle of shifted coins, a crackle in the rhododendrons. Johann Zorn had gone and Esther Carew was advancing nervously along the terrace. Felix stepped forward—under the kindly shelter of the dusk—to clasp her in his arms. A moment they embraced silently, for it was not often they found themselves alone, and then Esther delivered a murmured message.

A Woman with a Bad Heart.

Miss Annie Spencer, of Highland Farm, Broadholme, near Saxilby, Lincolnshire, has told a sensational story to a *Retford and Gainsboro' Times* reporter. Here are the main facts as she related them, and from their perusal the wonderful effects of Chas. Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness in all cases of debility, palpitation, and heart weakness will be gathered. Said Miss Spencer: "Just over five years ago I had an attack of brain fever. I got over it, however, but never got back my old health. Instead of feeling bright and well I felt heavy and depressed. Then I began to suffer from indigestion, palpitation, and general debility. My blood seemed to get out of order, and spots broke out on my face and forehead, as well as on my arms and breast. I consulted two of the best doctors in the district, and was told that my ailment was extreme debility as well as indigestion. No matter what I took to eat the effect was the same. Not only did it do me no good but it caused me terrible pain. Occasionally I had a sort of false appetite and took a violent fancy to some article of food. Yet when I had eaten it my suffering was terrible. The palpitation and heart trouble also caused me great pain and anxiety. So violent was it sometimes that I could hardly breathe, and I got very much afraid. In the end I became so weak that I was scarcely able to see anyone who visited me it put me so much about; and I was so fearfully debilitated that I had to take hold of the table to prevent myself from falling when I walked across the room. The doctor said he could not do anything more for me, and I gave myself up in despair. Somebody mentioned Chas. Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness to me, and in the hope that they would do me a little good—for I really never expected them to cure me—I had some purchased. I had not taken the first box, however, before I found that I could eat better and with less pain afterwards. Of course having experienced that, I persevered with them, and the second box made a wonderful difference in me. Every day I got better and better, and when I had taken a few boxes I was entirely cured. Indigestion is now unknown to me, and I can eat and enjoy any food whatever. The heart trouble has gone also, and I can even run up the stairs without the slightest fear. The spots and pimples have quite disappeared, I have recovered my former strength, and instead of crawling about the house, of no assistance to anybody and a burden to myself, I can do any kind of work which falls to my share. All this I owe to Chas. Forde's Bile Beans, and I felt I must give a testimonial."

The above is no isolated example of the power of Charles Forde's Bile Beans for Biliousness. They are superior to all known medicines for cases of heart weakness, palpitation, indigestion, liver and kidney disorders, constipation, headache, debility, nervousness, anæmia, summer-end "fag" and "that tired feeling," female ailments, the after effects of influenza, pimples, face sores, and all blood impurities. All chemists stock them, or you may obtain them from the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., 119 London Wall, E.C., by sending prices, one and three half-pence or two and nine.

"Brian is asking for you," she said; "can you come—at once?"

"At once!" repeated her lover, anxiously; "is there any change?"

"He—he is growing weaker every hour," faltered Esther. "Oh, Felix," she added, with a burst of tears, "how ever will Lady Dering bear it!"

Felix held the weeping girl to him as they went down the terrace. "You have conceived a strange attachment for Lady Dering," he remarked, trying to change the subject; "yet you have merely known her a few days—since she begged me to make her acquainted with you."

Esther dried her eyes. "She has suffered so," was her gentle answer; "first her husband and now her child. And she is quite young, not much older than I am; she told me this morning we must be sisters."

"And so you shall!" said Felix, as he led her in through the open window across the library and the hall, and thread the wide staircase, dim with the autumn evening. Side by side the two lovers went, forgetting their own new-found happiness in the grief of another woman and the pain of a dying child.

At a screened door they paused and entered. The apartment was Lady Dering's boudoir. Its high casements were ajar to the night air, a shaded lamp burned on the table by the bed—a lamp that a nurse, in the cool, picturesque costume of her clothes, was trimming deftly. Among the snowy linen of the couch lay Brian Dering, frail, wasted, the ghost of his former self. Over him leaned Stella Dering, her mouth set and an anguished gleam in her dark eyes.

"Is it Cousin Felix?" inquired the child, faintly.

"Yes, Brian," replied Felix; "you wanted me, so Miss Carew came to fetch me."

Brian held out one transparent hand. "I want you to make mother laugh again, Cousin Felix," he quavered; "she used to before father went away and came back—dead. You used to make her laugh a lot when it was a good day with her nerves, Cousin Felix. Get her to stop crying now and laugh instead. Father always said it was bad for her to cry so much. I have asked her to laugh a little, for me, but she won't."

He spoke slowly and with long pauses for breath between the words. Felix Dering turned away, overcome. But Stella Dering nerved herself with desperate resolution.

"I—I did laugh, darling, last night," she said, gathering the child into her arms; "I dreamt you were not a boy any longer, Brian, but a tiny rosy cloud floating up in the sky. And while I watched it it got thinner and thinner and then vanished. And I laughed to think how silly it all was!"

The laughter that Brian had asked for broke from her lips—a ripple of clear laughter, silver and bright as a chime of fairy bells. Esther clung to Felix, awed by that final triumph of mother-love over a nature usually so weak and hysterical.

Brian glanced up at his mother. "What a funny dream!" he murmured; "but I'm glad it made you laugh—you do laugh so prettily, mother."

He closed his eyes and lay against her. For a while he seemed to sleep, and the watchers stood silently about him. Minutes passed away—in the hall below a cuckoo clock marked the hour in a series of gay calls. Suddenly Brian started up.

"Not the blue light again!" he shrieked. "please, please, not the blue light!" He fell among his pillows, panting—his pale cheeks grew florid, his delicate nostrils dilated, he clutched convulsively at his throat. The nurse snatched a glass from the table and put it to his lips: the brandy only wetted the childish mouth. The head dropped back—the little heart had failed. Brian Dering was dead.

Stella Dering flung herself upon the body, white and tearless. Esther would have stolen to her, but the nurse checked the motion. "Let her be," she whispered; "words are cruel now."

Felix made a silent gesture of assent, and side by side Esther and he moved from the room. For long afterwards they could conjure up once more its tragic lights and shadows; the dead child, the stricken mother, the gleaming lamp, the open windows, and beyond, the sullen, yet magnificent, sky of passing storm.

As they stepped into the corridor without, a dark form went by—the cloaked figure of Judith Garland. They shrank from her, but she heard their footfalls and turned upon them a lowering countenance, cruel, vindictive, beautiful.

From the high oak gallery of the great staircase they saw her cross the hall, and, escorted by a disdainful maid, slink into the waiting brougham. A rattle of wheels and the sound of a closing door marked her final disappearance from Dering House.

* * * * *

So did Judith Garland—in the moment that her worst deed found its terrible and unlooked-for consummation—bid adieu to Wyresdale. Nor was she ever known to set foot in the quiet village where her ill-fated and unscrupulous passion had played so disastrous a part. Had she revisited the place a few years later—instead, as rumour had it, of joining her brother, his disreputable partner, and a certain Johann Zorn, on the Continent—she would have discovered how rapid time can heal even the breaches made by violence and treachery.

She would have seen Sir Felix Dering, no longer an object of suspicion to his neighbours, but liked and esteemed by half a county. She would have seen Esther Carew, now Lady Dering, a girl no more, but a woman, and the graceful sharer of her husband's political ambitions. She would have seen Stella, Lady Dering, absorbed in the education of a new Brian, the first-born of Esther and Felix, and almost believing it her own.

She would have seen a reformed Caleb Forester, a melancholy Mrs. Carew, a resigned Michael Brasher.

She would have seen Archibald Geddes and his wife thriving in the Wyresdale Pharmacy, Ted Spencer and Barbara prospering on the Dering estate. She would have seen a new maid at Dering House, one Louisa, who is learning not to drop her aspirates or the heels of her slippers, but to be smart and merry and to blush at the appearance of Inspector Brasher, who returns the compliment with interest.

She would have seen a new branch of the Hares at Wyresdale Park—a branch that is simple and hospitable, though immensely rich. She would have seen the hill, where once stood the observatory with its subterranean annex, planted with firs. Had she penetrated to the centre of this green grove she would have seen a granite monolith, engraved with initials and a date. The initials are those of Otto Hare's name; the date that of his death. On another facet of the monument is the inscription "Also J. K." Beneath lie the dismembered remains of the German physician and his strange ally, the Golden Dwarf.

The End.

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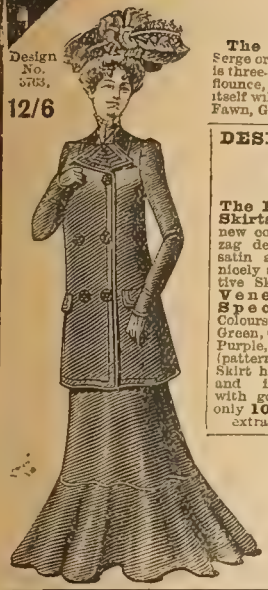

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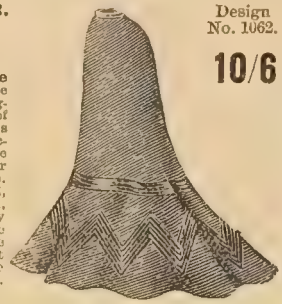

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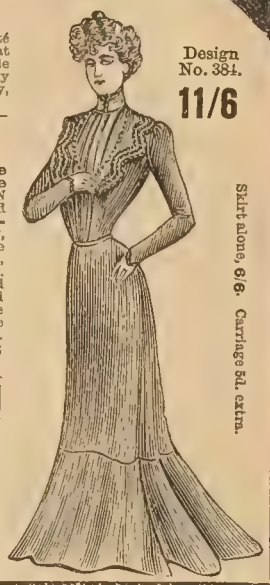

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Short Stories That . . . . . Make You Laugh.

We devote every week space in *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a *P.W.* penknife to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case, the source MUST be stated. Attempts must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, October 14th. Postcards only, please. The prize of £1 1s. has been awarded this week to Mr. J. R. Trinder, of 14 Coleshill Street, Birmingham, whose contribution is denoted by a star thus.*

AT a late election in a country parish a cart might have been seen perambulating the district. On one side of a huge board were the words, "Vote for Thomas Jones"; on the other ran the legend, "Poll Early." A villager was asked by his vicar whom he intended to vote for. "Wol, sir," deliberately observed the old man, who had apparently only read one side of the cart, "I allays goes for the ladies, so I shall vote for 'Poll Early.'"

A TRAIN on one of our Southern railways, whilst proceeding between two country stations, came to a standstill. The guard went up to the driver and asked him what was the matter. "Cow on the line," he replied. The cow was removed and the train went on its journey. After proceeding some distance, it again stopped. The guard, who was by this time getting impatient, rushed up once more and asked what caused the delay. "Cow on the line," the driver said. "What! Another cow?" "No. Same cow."

*HE went into a Birmingham hotel, and ordered soup. He looked just the kind of man who would be difficult to please, and it was with fear and trembling that the waiter placed the dish of really delicious soup before him. "I can't eat this soup!" said the customer a few moments later. The waiter took it away, and brought soup of another kind. "I can't eat this!" snarled the customer. The waiter hurriedly brought a third dish. "I cannot possibly eat this soup!" exclaimed the customer, in an aggravatingly loud tone, which could be heard by everyone in the room. The waiter, by this time quite furious, called the proprietor, and explained the case. "Why can't you eat this soup, sir?" demanded the proprietor angrily. "Because," quietly responded the customer, "I have no spoon."

A YOUNG mill-hand, having lost his sweetheart through his own hot-headed folly, first threatened to commit suicide, and then became vulgarly insistent in his demands for the return of the presents he had given her. "What good will they be to you if you're goin' to drown yourself in t' mill-pond?" she scoffed. "Never you mind, I want them back," he said evasively. "Very well, I'll see that you have them," the girl reluctantly agreed. But five days passed, and the young man still bemoaned the loss of the forfeited trinkets. Once more he requested their return. "Oh, lad, I wish you'd stop worryin' me," sighed the girl, anxious by now for a reconciliation. "I've given t' presents up long since. They're waiting for you at t' bottom o' t' mill-pond, tied up in a red handkerchief; you can't miss but see 'em when you jump in." Then the humble young man apologised, and the quarrel was patched up in the old sweet way.

A LITTLE girl, aged nine, called her father to her bedside the other evening. "Papa," said the little diplomat, "I want to ask your advice." "Well, my dear, what is it about?" "What do you think it will be best to give me on my birthday?"

MR. KIRKLAND: "And why do you think, Mr. Dunley, that the world is better now and more beautiful than it was thirty-five years ago?" Mr. Dunley (who is after his sweet daughter): "Because—because you were not in it then." Papa Kirkland's objections to the young man have been overridden.

A YOUNG lady was teaching her class of girls in the Sunday school, and striving to impress upon them the beauty and desirability of the great Christian virtues. "Yes," she said, "Truth, and Faith, and Meekness, are all good, but what is the one thing we must all especially strive after, the one great thing necessary for our welfare and happiness?" "'Usbands, miss," answered a little girl promptly.

"I HEAR," said the reporter to the manager of a railway noted for the unpunctuality of its trains, "there was an accident on your line last night." "Oh, do you?" was the sarcastic reply. "Yes." "Do you know anything about it?" "Only that it happened to the train which was due here at 8.15." "That train came in to the minute, sir." "Are you sure of that?" "Of course!" "That must have been the accident referred to." And the reporter dodged out safely.

A SCHOOLBOY'S essay on water is quoted by a contemporary. One or two of the writer's ideas upon the subject are strikingly novel. For instance, he divides all water into four sub-headings—rain water, soda water, holy water, and brine. "Water," he continues, "is used for a good many things. Sailors use water to go to sea on. Water is a good thing to fire at boys with a squirt gun, and to catch fishes in." But the strangest of all uses for water is this: "Nobody," he says, "could be saved from drowning if there wasn't water to pull them out of."

WHILE a certain battalion was marching from the camping ground to the railway station, *en route* for home, last summer, a rather corpulent sergeant, who wore an exceedingly large helmet, was much disgusted by several ragged urchins, who kept darting between the ranks and compelling him to "break step." At last, losing all patience, he sharply boxed one little sinner's ears, and shouted, "Take that, you young demon, and clear off!" "Garn, yer fat old buster, an' mind who yer hittin'!" yelled the youngster in reply, adding, as he pointed to our stout comrade's very ample headgear: "Look hear, old red tub, if yer hits me again, I'll report yer to th' War Office for runnin' away with a tent!"

LADY: "Is this celery fresh?" Dealer: "Yes'm." "Real fresh?" "Yes'm." "Just in?" "Yes'm." "Is it crisp?" "Yes'm." "Are you sure it is all right?" "Yes'm." "Where did you get it?" "From a market gardner, mum." "To-day?" "Yes'm." "This morning?" "Yes'm." "How much is it?" "Sixpence a bundle." "Isn't that rather high?" "Not at this season." "I've got it here lately for less." "That was small and rather green." "Can you send it up?" "Yes'm." "In time for dinner?" "Oh, yes'm." "Just break off a piece and let me try it." "Yes'm. Here is some." "Humph! It isn't nice at all. It's withered." "Well, mum, it's a good while since you asked if it was fresh"

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DO YOU GOLF?

If you do, there is an article in the October number of THE LADY'S MAGAZINE entitled "Women on the Links," which will interest you considerably.

IF YOU DON'T GOLF

Perhaps you know someone who does, and they will thank you for drawing their attention to this article on the "Ancient and Royal Game." It is illustrated with photographs of many notable players.

THIS IS NOT ALL.

In addition to this there are numberless other attractive features in THE LADY'S MAGAZINE for October. Under the title of "Painting Puppies" there is an article giving many anecdotes of Mr. Cecil Aldin, the eminent caricaturist, and his puppy models. It is profusely illustrated from original oil paintings and sketches.

STATUES TO WOMEN

Are somewhat rare, but those in the United Kingdom form the subject of an attractive article, fully illustrated with photographs.

"CHILD CRIMINALS,"

By Annesley Kenealy, is a most interesting account of Bedford Prison, where the young Hooligan is taught to become a law-abiding citizen.

A large instalment of Mrs. B. M. Croker's serial . . . . . .

"THE CAT'S PAW,"

In addition to a number of stories and storyettes, will be found in this number.

THE LADY'S MAGAZINE—PUBLISHED OCT. 10.

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE.

Has your photo appeared yet? Is it on page 466? Better look, hadn't you? In *case*, you know. For to miss a five-pound note would be a pity, wouldn't it? You might regret it for years. It might even keep you from sleeping o' nights. So in order to avert all such eventualities turn at once to page 466, and satisfy yourself. If your photo is there, why drop us a postcard, in accordance with the conditions, and then any morning you may wake up and find yourself the possessor of five pounds more than you had the previous day. And even if your portrait isn't in this number, don't despair, for it may be in next week or the week after.

❦

Once again I want to draw your attention to the fact that next week's number will contain the opening chapters of Mr. Henry T. Johnson's New Serial Story, entitled

"Dead to the World."

If you enjoy a good, healthy, thrilling story, fascinating from the first line to the last, here is your chance.

❦

Advice to Readers on Various Matters.

(Replies to Correspondents.)

You ask me, "Anxious," if I can tell you of a hair dye that will dye your red-brown hair a light brown, as you are going into business after Christmas, and want to change the colour if you can.

As far as I know, there is no really reliable hair-dye in the market which will answer the purpose you require. Take my advice and leave your hair as it is; there is no such beautiful hair as a real red-brown. Surely it cannot interfere with your business. I am glad you like *Short Stories*.

"A. Z." is astonished to find such a number of careless people in the world. He has recently come across some statistics dealing with property left in railway carriages, and he sends them to me. "In the course of a single month 13,848 railway travellers part company with their boxes, 10,136 lose sight of their bags and portmanteaux, 13,380 leave behind their umbrellas and sticks, 10,217 involuntarily deprive themselves of articles of clothing, 1,333 forget their hat-cases, 2,914 their hampers, 3,344 their purses, jewellery, and books, and 3,750 their parcels. These articles, together with 8,391 entered as sundries, raise the number of waifs and strays upon our railways to 67,313 a month."

It is curious to note that this last item of "sundries" includes a number of "babies." Fancy a woman forgetting her baby!—but there, I expect it was the brute of a husband who was responsible. Men are so careless, especially when babies are concerned.

C. T. asks if it is true that some of our pleasantest perfumes are derived from substances which in themselves possess most disagreeable odours?

This is so. Musk is obtained chiefly from the musk-deer, and is contained in a fleshy bag about the size of a hen's egg. The dried musk in each bag averages about one-third of an ounce, and is worth a sovereign in the market. The odour of new musk is so powerful that the dealers are forced to cover their nostrils with thick cloths while inspecting the bags or "pods." This extraordinary perfume is said to retain its pungency after exposure to the air for a hundred years. Ambergris is a morbid secretion of the sperm whale. It imparts a delicate odour to perfumes, but its smell is very offensive when in its crude state. The oil of pine-apples is elaborated from sugar and putrid cheese; and the loathsome fluid produced during the manufacture of whisky, and known as fusel oil, is by one particular mode of treatment made to yield the fragrant oil of pears, by another process oil of apples, and by other carefully-devised methods the essential oil of grapes and oil of cognac.

In answer to "Player," I certainly think that chess may be entitled to the distinction of being the most ancient game extant. It appears to have been invented in China or Hindostan, whence it found its way into Persia. The Arabians were very partial to it; and, according to some authorities, the Crusaders learnt it of them, and thus introduced it into England. But others date the time chess was known in this country to a much earlier period. Bishop Etteric relates that when he obtained admission to Canute the Great, about midnight, upon some urgent business, he found the King and his courtiers engaged at play, some at dice and others at chess. Another author supposes the game to have been known at the Conquest, from the circumstance of the Court of Exchequer—so called from its having a chequered cloth on the table of the same design as a chess-board—being then established. As a proof that a knowledge of this game was formerly considered a valuable accomplishment, it may be mentioned that there are no fewer than twenty-six English families which have chess-boards and chess-rooks emblazoned on their arms.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

I am open to consider original stories of any length from 1,500 to 6,000 words. The character of stories required may be best ascertained by a careful reading of the contents of the paper. All MSS. are dealt with promptly, and every effort is made to return rejected stories which are accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes. At the same time, I cannot hold myself responsible for MSS. accidentally lost. Communications of this kind should be addressed The Editor, *Short Stories*, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, Strand, W.C.

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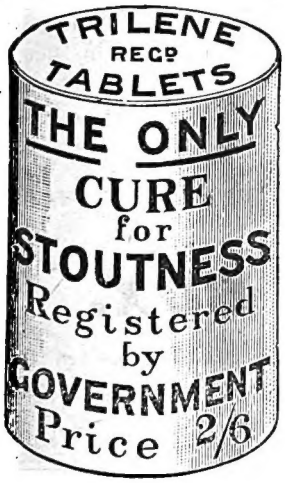
Can be CURED by taking

TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

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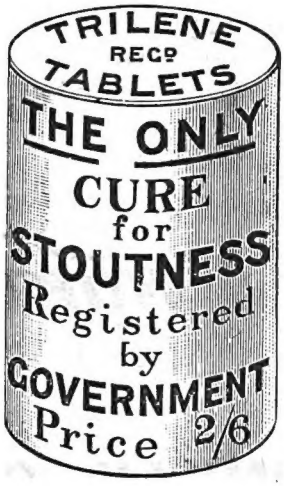

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

MRS. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

MISS CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 5lb., but am now 11st., and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 2lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints,—such has been the case with me.

"Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

MRS. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

MISS NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Risholm Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

"West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets, which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

MRS. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44 Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Mrs. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

Mr. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs., says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mrs. E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes: "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Mrs. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver, nr. Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 63 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

Miss F. L. BALL, 47 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol, writes: "I am quite cured through your Tablets. They improve the figure, and greatly relieve shortness of breath."

Miss PATIENT, of Woodberry, Theydon Bois: "Feel great benefit from Tablets. I have lost 2st., and am sufficiently reduced."

Mrs. DREW, of 1 Bellevue Gardens, The Nursery, Devizes, writes: "I took Tablets some years ago; they soon reduced me and I have not got stout since. Send me a box for my mother."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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THE WORLD'S MEDICINE.

BEECHAM'S PILLS

For Bilious and Nervous Disorders, Flatulence and Pain in the Stomach, Sick Headache, Giddiness, a sense of repletion and discomfort after eating, Dizziness and Drowsiness, Cold Chills, Flushings of Heat, Loss of Appetite, Shortness of Breath, Costiveness, Scurvy and Blotches on the Skin, sleeplessness, Disturbing Dreams, Low Spirits, Loss of Energy, and Nervous Dyspepsia in all its forms. ***The first dose generally gives relief in twenty minutes.*** This is no fiction, for in countless cases the immediate effect has proved remarkable.

Every sufferer is earnestly invited to make a trial of BEECHAM'S PILLS, which will fully justify their reputation of being

WORTH A GUINEA A BOX.

FOR FEMALES of all ages these Pills are simply invaluable, as a few doses will restore free and regular conditions, and effectually remove the causes of much suffering to the sex. For a

WEAK STOMACH,
IMPAIRED DIGESTION,
DISORDERED LIVER,

BEECHAM'S PILLS act like "MAGIC," and a few doses will be found to work wonders on the most important organs in the human economy. They brace up the nervous and muscular systems, revive the long lost complexion, bring back the keen edge of appetite, and arouse into action the, too often, slumbering energies of mind and body. As a blood-purifier it is not too much to say that THEY HAVE NO EQUAL.

One of the best guarantees that can be offered to the nervous and debilitated is that BEECHAM'S PILLS have by far the largest sale of any Patent Medicine in the World, being Over Six Million Boxes per Annum.

This has been achieved **Without the Publication of Testimonials**; the convincing fact is that BEECHAM'S PILLS RECOMMEND THEMSELVES.

Prepared only by the Proprietor, THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire, and sold by Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

In Boxes, 1/1½ and 2/9 each, containing 56 and 168 pills respectively, with Full Directions.